

**2008**  
**Lieutenant Governor's**  
**Writing Awards Program**

**Eighth Grade Essays**

Sponsored by  
Lieutenant Governor André Bauer  
State of South Carolina

# **Regional Winners**

**Region One Winner**  
**Eighth Grade**  
**Vine and Branches Home Educators**  
**Horry County**  
**Margaret Perry**

**You traveled to a different era to relive history.**  
**Explain what era you visited and explain why.**

If I had a chance to go back to the past and relive some part of history, I think I would visit between the times of 287 and 121 BC. I would pick this time era is because this was the time of my favorite scientist Archimedes. He was the scientist that set the foundation for the all the future scientists of the world.

Archimedes was a “problem solver” for the king, Hieron. He had just given a goldsmith a huge chunk of gold and had asked him to make a crown out of it. When the king received the crown he couldn’t tell whether the goldsmith had used all the gold, or if he had put some silver of a lesser value in the middle of the crown. The king gave Archimedes the crown and asked him to figure out whether it was all gold or not. Archimedes worked, and performed tests and still could not figure it out. One day he was taking a break from his research and was getting ready to take a bath in a public bathing area, when he looked down and noticed his tub was filled all the way to the top. When Archimedes put his foot in the water he noticed that the same amount of him that went into the tub came out in water. “That’s it!” said Archimedes. And he was so excited that rather than finishing his bath or even putting on his clothes he ran down the street nude shouting, “Eureka, Eureka!!!”. This translated in English means “I’ve done it”, or “I have found it”. He ran straight to the king’s castle and told him the news. Archimedes asked the king for a chunk of gold the exact same size and weight of the gold he had given the goldsmith. When Archimedes got the slab of gold he took the crown and put it into a tub. A small amount of water spilled out. When he put the slab of gold in the water large amounts

of water came gushing forth from the small tub. The king was both outraged and pleased. He was happy that Archimedes had figured out the problem but now he had to take care of the goldsmith, and he didn't need Archimedes' help for this one. The king, of course, had the goldsmith hung, because robbery was a sin punishable by death.

Archimedes had been working diligently to make new war weapons in order to keep the Romans at bay. He had made strange weapons like the "Death Ray", which was a series of mirrors used to reflect the light and heat from the sun to the Roman ships and burn them. But alas, the Romans crept in and took over Syracuse. While the Romans were pillaging the city one soldier came across Archimedes.

Archimedes asked him not to disturb his circles for he was working a geometry problem in the dirt. The soldier was cruel and killed him. When the new king found out he was outraged and had the soldier hung. Just imagine how much more we might know today if it hadn't been for the cruelty and ignorance of one heartless soldier.

## The Pitcher in the Picture

86

by Keith Millender  
Calhoun Academy

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I was utterly shocked. Something like this had never been seen before. The picture that my mother said that she had gotten from her great, great grandmother was alive. Then, I heard the sound of the lemonade falling into the glass in the picture.

All of a sudden, every picture in my house came alive. The dogs playing poker began to howl and bark while our replica of the Mona Lisa started to sing. By the way, she is a terrible singer. I had to get my head straight and think. Everything was so loud, so I took the pictures off the walls and put them face down on the floor. Finally, I had some peace and quiet.

I got my bike and rode around the neighborhood to see if anyone else had noticed this phenomenon. I kept riding and riding, but there was no one to be found. I stopped and went into my friend's house, but what I saw there was even more terrifying than the paintings. My best friend's living room furniture had come alive, and all that was left of Billy was his sneakers that were hanging out of the sofa's mouth.

Confused and alarmed, I ran as fast as my legs would carry me out of Billy's house and down the street. Every inanimate object I passed sprang to life. The lampposts, the bushes, and even the rocking chairs on peoples' porches all began chasing me. I turned a corner at the end of the street, I heard my mom's voice saying, "Wake up, Honey, time for school."

Thank goodness it was just a dream. I got up, dressed, and walked downstairs. I ate a bowl of cereal and headed for the door. Then, I saw the pitcher in the picture begin to pour...

**Region Three Winner  
Eighth Grade**

**Dorchester Academy  
Dorchester County  
Joshua Bucci**

103

**When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?**

The year is 2074. I just turned 80 years old. I'm sitting on my porch with my wife, who just returned from the hospital. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease less than a year ago and today has been given a clean bill of health. The cure for Alzheimer's was discovered in 2052. In my lifetime so far, scientists have discovered cures for many cancers and other debilitating diseases. Doctors and healthcare have changed drastically since the early 2000's. Back when I took my mom to the hospital you had to choose between buying your groceries to feed the family or buying your medications to keep yourself healthy. Now everything has changed and healthcare has become affordable. Everyone gets their medications and the same treatment from doctors no matter how much money they make or who they know. Getting older isn't as scary as it used to be.

I have three children of my own, two boys and one girl. I was very fortunate to be able to put them all through college. My daughter went to Harvard, got a law degree, and is now running to be a United States Senator. My two sons are keeping up the family business that I started 50 years ago. I designed the first car that runs entirely on recyclable aluminum. (Of course, now there are a ton of companies doing this same thing.) I was responsible for bringing 500 jobs to my home town. So now I am financially stable and I receive all the benefits from the company I founded. I have hope that my company will continue to grow and provide jobs in my county. I am also very proud that my company does not pollute the air.

I still live in Ridgeville, South Carolina, where I have lived my whole life. The area is full of woods and wildlife. There are new laws to protect forests and wet lands. I built my own home a few acres over from my parents so I could help them as they grew older. My home is partially run from solar energy because everyone is working to save our valuable natural resources. I lost my parents about 37 years ago so my oldest son lives in the home I grew up in and helps to take care of my wife and I. Since my health could not be any better for a man my age, I still enjoy hunting and fishing on the Edisto River. The river has become free of pollution from factories and is more beautiful than ever. I have a great river shack, built from wood that I milled myself, where my grandchildren come to stay on the weekends. Children are safer today more than ever because of the new laws keeping criminals where they belong and off of our streets.

My wife and I enjoy traveling. Years ago we purchased a second home in a place called Puy le veque, France. The home has a small vineyard out back which grow grapes used in making wine. We try to go there two or three times a year. Air travel has improved greatly in my time. The security in airports is automated with a large type of detecting device and doesn't take as much time to go through. Since all the countries in the world are now peaceful, security is not as much as an issue it was years ago. After the

War on Terrorism ended in 2010, traveling even through the Middle East became just as easy as traveling to Canada. Airplanes are able to fly longer, farther and faster than ever before because of the new kind of fuels they are using. Speaking of travel, almost all cities with large populations have a new type of subway system that runs above and below the ground. These systems can travel quickly from the urban areas to the newly developed rural areas, so waiting in traffic is a thing of the past. People still drive, but it is very quick and affordable to use the new subway type of systems. Because of this, pollution from cars has greatly decreased and no longer has an effect on the ozone layer.

Over the years almost everything has changed for the better. The government has cleaned itself and the country up. It has made changes to try and make everything fair. Taxes and healthcare are no longer the main issues. People can now afford to send their children to college and still have enough money to retire comfortably. I am proud to call myself an American. At 80 years old, I still enjoy my life to the fullest. I believe now is the time when anyone who works hard can achieve anything they want.

**Region Four Winner  
Eighth Grade  
Southside Christian School  
Greenville County  
Sarah Marchbanks**

“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...”

I grabbed a glass so it wouldn't stain the pretty blue checkered tablecloth in the peaceful outdoor breakfast scene I had painted. It was my idea to have a gallery of live paintings you could interact with. For example, the Mona Lisa in my gallery will smile and share a conversation with you; nice lady, really. You could take part in The Last Supper or simply dine with friends in another piece of art called The Sunset Banquet. Perhaps, though, you would rather share a formal dinner. Dress appropriately, for this painting is entitled, The Wedding Reception.

If you aren't hungry during your visit, there are plenty of other things to do; attend a wedding, join the hunt, or play poker with a famous group of dogs. Play wisely, for the bull dog is a clever fellow. You may just want to sit in the warm sand on the beach and watch the sunset. Whatever you do, you won't find an experience like this anywhere else. Where else could you ask Beethoven for a piano lesson? Normally he wouldn't hear you, but we gave him a hearing aid; he was unbelievably thankful. He and the other composers will offer music lessons in harpsichord, piano, violin, and other strings. Don't worry, the price of a ticket is all you must pay for these wonderful musician's instructions.

There are activities for everyone. People of all ages will come and have a great time at the Living Art Gallery. We hope you enjoy your visit!



# **District Winners**

Calhoun Falls High School  
Abbeville County  
Jessica Lynette Sanders

***"You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain what era you visited and explain why."***

*If you could travel to any era, which one would you choose? What would be the reasons behind your choice? Would you say you wanted to travel to the B.C. era so that you could come into contact with the legendary Alexander the Great? Or maybe you would want to travel to the year 1941 to witness the attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Whatever reason behind your choice of which era you would like to travel to, it would most certainly educate you in some way or another. Being a "time traveler" would be extraordinary and rewarding for certain reasons. If I could have the opportunity to travel to any era of my choice, I would not choose just one, but at least three.*

*My first choice would be World War I. The year is between 1914 and 1918 that takes place in France. Have you heard of the legendary Lafayette Escadrille? Americans came to Europe to help the French defeat the Germans. They trained in France to become America's first fighter pilots. The Germans already had advanced "flying machines" and piloting skills so the Americans who came that did not know anything about flying, had to step up their game. I have always loved the heartache and suspense of wars fought between America and foreign countries. I've been fascinated with the whole "war" thing for a long time. I've always wanted to fly also. Just imagine being up there in the vast, blue sky that stretches beyond any human boundary; soaring through the clouds and with the birds. Being and feeling free like a bird. What would be a greater feeling than that? I hate war and I hate what it does to people, but I love the triumph and heroism of it all. War, no matter how damaging and horrible, tells a story of its own. The men of the Lafayette Escadrille distinguished themselves in a manner that none before them had dared and became true heroes that experienced triumph, tragedy, love, and loss amid the chaos of World War I.*

*My second choice would be the year 1912. On April 14, 1912, the "unsinkable" R.M.S. Titanic struck an iceberg and sunk. The luxury liner, Titanic, collided with an iceberg in the frigid North Atlantic Ocean and sunk in the early morning hours of April 15, 1912, bringing down with her more than 1,500 souls. The most tragic part of it was that those people could have been saved if those in the lifeboats had gone back or if the ship Carpathia had gotten there in time. My mother once said to me, "I believe that you had an ancestor that died on the Titanic and that you were reincarnated." I love Titanic. If I had been in the year 1912, I would've bought a ticket and sailed on the Titanic! I just wish that I could've had the opportunity to be there for her maiden voyage. I'd like to go back in time and change how things happened and prevent the thousands of deaths, but I can't change history. Titanic fascinates me. Her beauty overwhelms me greatly. Titanic was proved "sinkable" on that cold April night in 1912. How wonderful it must have been to witness with your own eyes the making of a spectacular and breathtaking masterpiece built by human hands that set sail not knowing the tragic fate that awaited her in the frigid North Atlantic?*

*My third choice would be the Vietnam War. The year is 1965 and America is at war with North Vietnam. Lt. Col. Hal Moore was a born leader and committed to his troops. He and his troops targeted the Ia Drang Valley, called "The Valley of Death". It was one of the most violent battles in U.S. history. It's a heroic true story of commitment, courage and sacrifice. The Vietnam War lasted from 1965-1975 and more than 58,000 men died fighting the war. Lt. Col. Hal Moore is*

somebody that I do look up to because of his character and his dedication to his troops. The men that fought this war and any other war, fought for their country, their loved ones, and their freedom. They are unforgettable military heroes and will always be remembered in our hearts. If I were there during that time, I would've liked to be a nurse so that I could help the soldiers that were wounded. I always wanted to help some how in the time of war and I figure that's one way to help. Some of the soldiers that returned home didn't have anyone to welcome them back and I felt sorry for them and I would like to give something to them to make them feel loved, special and appreciated. People change when they go to war and are sometimes misunderstood so I want to understand them and remember them as heroes that fought for everything to live for and honor those that died in the process.

There are so many things and places that I would've loved to have seen. If only it were actually possible to be a "time traveler"? I could change history and make a difference. I could prevent deaths and tragedies. I could make all the bad things go away and let all the good things come in. I could do things that I have never been able to do or even dream of. To change history would destroy the time line and everything would be different. So we can dream all we want and wish all we want, but we can't do anything about the past. You can't change the past and you can't go back in time. You can plan your future and make it real. I chose World War I, the year Titanic sank, and the Vietnam War because I wanted to make a difference and I wanted to do things that I have always wanted to do but never got the chance to do. It's great to dream and dream big you should! I love being a dreamer and I love everything that comes with it. I love the freedom that comes with it. "Freedom Isn't Free"- that's how the saying goes. More than anything in the world, I would hope to have had learned something from my experiences of traveling to different eras and I do believe that I would've learned something great from all of it.

**Kennedy Middle School**

**Aiken County**

**Sami Cooler**

**“When the Pitcher in the Picture began to Pour, I...”**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I dismissed it as my imagination. When I returned to the kitchen ten minutes later though, I realized it was very real. It was early morning, my parents had left for work, and I had just come back to grab breakfast when I saw the water. It was all over the floor. At first I thought the toilet had overflowed, but then I saw the water falling down the wall. It was pouring from the pitcher in the picture. I ran to the phone to call my parents, but the phone was dead! How could it be dead at a time like this? I did not know what to do. The water was flooding the house faster than it was coming out of the picture! I was still astounded that this could even happen.

Frantically, I ran to the door and tried everything to open it, but nothing worked. It seemed to lock itself back. I was so flabbergasted that I barely noticed that I was halfway under water. All the windows were locked too, and I could not open them. Now I was sitting on the highest bookshelf to avoid the water. I was on the verge of hyperventilating and screaming when I saw her.

Anna Landon, I recognized her immediately. She was halfway underwater, dressed in white. It did not take long to comprehend I was looking at a ghost. The memories of that fateful day last summer rushed into my mind.

“No! This is not happening!” I cried. My eyes were closed tightly, remembering that ominous day. I told Anna it would be all right and nothing would happen to her. I begged her to go swimming even though she was afraid of the water and could not swim. Finally, she gave in, even though the current was strong. She had drowned, and I could not save her. I told investigators that she had fallen off the bridge, but she did not. She swam out too far, and I had felt guilty ever since.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” I pleaded, but the water was rising. Soon it would consume me, and I would fall like Anna...

Suddenly, my mother’s voice awakened me.

“Are you okay? You were screaming in your sleep.”

“I am fine,” I said shaken.

Returning to sleep was impossible, for I could not rid my mind of Anna’s ghostly face. When I saw the picture of the pitcher the next morning, I could not endure the guilt any longer.

“Mom,” I said, “there is something I need to tell you.”

**Allendale Fairfax Middle School  
Allendale County  
Ashleigh S. Williams**

**Standardized tests in school are of benefit to students. Agree or disagree? Defend your position.**

Many people have asked the question, "Is standardized testing in school really beneficial to students?" The issue of standardized testing is an issue that has been argued for many years. Board members, teachers, principals, parents, and even congress have argued this issue. Some people think it's beneficial, and others think it's just a waste of time and money. Unlike most of those people, I have good reasons to support my opinion.

Standardized testing is a very convenient way for students to find their areas of academic strengths and weaknesses. By comparing the data of recent standardized tests with the data of previous ones, students are able to find the areas that need to be improved. Then, the information can be given to their teachers who can help them improve in these areas. All of these magnificent results are the effect of standardized testing.

Not only are standardized tests useful for helping students find what their problem areas are, they're also great motivators. Because students want to do well on the tests, they are compelled to study more. Not only does the studying help them to do well on the tests, it helps them to do well in their class work as well. It's quite a simple concept. Tests cause students to study, and studying causes students to succeed. Without standardized tests, students might not study as much as they need to. And if students don't study, they might not succeed.

Last but not least, standardized tests help students achieve their aspirations. Students need these tests in order to pass on to the next grade, graduate from high school, earn their degrees, and even graduate from college. If they didn't take these tests, they wouldn't know if they were truly ready to pass or graduate. Doctors might not really be qualified to be doctors, and teachers might not really be qualified to be teachers. If students didn't take standardized tests such as the SAT, they wouldn't know what colleges they are qualified to attend. Without Exit exams, it would be hard to determine whether a student knew all of the basics they need to know before they graduated. Without standardized tests, the school system would be in total chaos.

Standardized testing, in a way, links students in different schools throughout the state because they are all taking the same test. This lets them know that they are all learning the same information. The statement was made that, "Standardized tests in school are of benefit to students." I most definitely agree.

Palmetto Middle School  
Anderson County  
Desiree Lafreniere

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I quickly dropped the photo album. Silently, I waited to see if anything would happen but nothing did. I eyed the album awkwardly as if it were a five legged fish. But nothing happened. I felt foolish, sitting on my bed shaking and too scared to pick up an old album.

It didn't take long for me to control my body again. Cautiously and very reluctantly I reached for the album and flipped to my Aunt Diana's section. Just like her, I love pictures. She took pictures of anything and everything she saw and liked, and that was a lot of things. When I got to the picture of the set table, it did not move. I faintly touched the photo. It felt normal and looked normal but I could have sworn I saw it pour.

I continued to flip through the crimson album, looking at times before mine. Most of the pictures were by my aunt. I spotted one of my favorites, two rocking chairs on my great grandmother's porch. They were rocking gently in the breeze. A few leaves fell before I closed the album with bewilderment piercing through me.

I opened the album again with a major sense of déjà vu. Fear was getting stronger like a current pulling at me, yet excitement and curiosity were on the verge of drowning me. Slowly, carefully I flipped through until the table appeared. Everything stood still.

Trembling, as I took out the picture I realized I was the probably the first in many years to touch it. Even as I was tilting and turning the image all angles, nothing happened. I turned it over. Still nothing. As I was placing it back in the album something lightly shimmered on the back.

Looking carefully I still saw nothing. But when the light suddenly reflected off the back, there was writing. I read it once, twice, and still uncertain of it's meaning;

*Not all can see the raw beauty and understand it's story. Capture not only a moment but some before and after.*

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I understood and smiled knowingly.

**Honea Path Middle School  
Anderson County  
Kathleen Powell**

**“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour I ...”**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour I was surprised. I was in my small room, staring out into the vast night sky. I only looked up when I heard the sound of water pouring into a pond. I couldn't believe my eyes, I thought I was going mad! I quickly jumped up. I cried for my mom, she rushed in as if she had been running from a pack of savage dogs.

“Aura, what is it!?” she puffed. I pointed at the painting, she looked, as I realized, all too late, that the water had stopped pouring. I gawked at the painting, not knowing how to explain it to her.

As she left the room, I heard someone behind me. I turned to see a man holding the pitcher. I knew I should have been scared but I was calm.

“Hello, my name is Ranon.” His voice made the words flow like a sweet melody.

“Would you like to see my home?” I nodded. We stepped through the painting into a magnificent forest.

“Where am I!?”

“Welcome to Forenviel, home of the dragons.” he replied in his wonderful voice. I couldn't believe it! A dragon swooped overhead, colorful birds darted ahead and landed in nearby trees, fairies would disappear and reappear elsewhere. I stared around in fascination and awe, as Ranon led me through the forest with a sad, foreboding look on his face.

“What's wrong?” I whispered, for the look blocked my voice.

“This place will soon die ... and so shall I ...” he said, his voice cracking.

“Why!?” my voice returned.

“When you are fifteen, find my son. He will have gray eyes and wolf ears.”

As I started to reply, he gave me a small smile.

“Aura, Forenviel is your destiny! When the time comes, be brave. Good-bye.” With that, I awoke in my room.

“It was all a dream ...” I said, as I pinched myself, just to make sure. I looked in my mirror to see a 3-year-old girl, my reflection. I quietly thought about what Ranon had said. When I finally looked to the starry night sky, I sighed.

“I'll see you someday, Rallen. When the time comes, Ranon, I'll be brave!”

Once I had said this, a shooting star quickly danced across the sky. I knew then, that my adventure in Forenviel was only beginning!

**Starr-Iva Middle School  
Anderson County  
Christian Franks**

**You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain what era you visited and explain why.**

D-Day, June 6, 1944. I'm very nervous because in about three minutes, we'll be landing on a beach, code-named Omaha, on the coast of France. About twenty minutes ago, the bombers from the Eighth Air Force, along with destroyers on the water, blasted the Nazi defenses. Now, the driver of the Higgins boat is shouting to us.

"Clear the ramp! God be with you," he says

Suddenly, the ramps drop, and a swarm of bullets overtakes us. I look up and see Lieutenant Johansen.

"Over the side! Into the channel!" he shouts.

Bullets zip over my head as I jump into the channel. All around me is blood and death. The bullets even hit the fish. When I finally get on shore, I'm disoriented, cold, and soaked. Then, I hear Sergeant Elrod shouting for me.

"Private Franks, get over here!"

Dodging the Mg-42 rounds from the concrete bunkers, I realize that there aren't any American tanks on the beach. My Thompson sub-machine gun is lost on the way up, so I really need another one. There's an explosion, and another soldier gets literally blown to pieces. Luckily, he was holding a Thompson, so I take it, along with his ammo clips. Lieutenant Johansen looks over.



“Good to see you made it,” he says.

The carnage on the beach is unimaginable. Running towards the sandbag machine gun nests, several more of our men are killed. After taking out a Nazi lieutenant, I take his Hitler Youth knife, and wallet. Seeing pictures of his family, his baby boy and little girl, I feel remorse. Just as I look up, a Mauser rifle round pulls through my brother, an army ranger. That does it for me! I go into a blind fury and show no mercy. Feeling a sharp pain in my back, I turn around, blowing holes into the Nazi who stabbed me. My world goes dark.

Then, I snap back into focus, looking down at the Purple Heart and Silver Star in my hand, my great grandpa’s medals. I stare at my classmates, searching for words.

“I chose to explore the World War II era because my great-grandpa experienced first-hand the horrors and triumph of D-Day. Until I explored this topic, I never realized what it was like.”

My mind raced back to that close-up look of war.

“Now I know.”

Riverside Middle School  
Anderson County  
Myrissa Stevens

Pretend you can travel to a different Era in time to relive history.

"Mom, I'm going back to ancient China." "Why do you want to go there?" "So I can learn about the Huns, the Great Wall of China, and some of their inventions." "Okay sweetie just be back before dinner." "Alright".

-Gong sound-

"Alright you lazy kids get to work!" Well gosh, the Chinese are treated like slaves, what are we even building? Me, being not the brightest crayon in the box, goes and asks the man with the big whip in his hands. As I'm asking him, he looks at me like I'm stupid and leans back with the whip. Before I can even scream, I'm out like a light.

I finally wake up to a man screaming at me to get to the wall. Then I realize, he means the Great Wall of China. I'm helping build the Great Wall of China! Awesome dude! So now that im conscious, I head towards the soon to be longest-human-made structure. I can't believe this thing is going to be 4,000 miles long. I guess I'm in the city of Shanhaguan. Well at least this wall will protect China. Speaking of protecting, who are the people with all the armour and weapons? Oh-no it's the Huns!

As everyone starts running and screaming, I stay to see who the leader is. I think it is Attila, we're in trouble! Attila is known as the scourge of God. He is remembered as the epitome of cruelty and rapacity. I don't really know what that means, but I bet it's not good. The way everyone's screaming, I guess it's true, the Huns did kill a lot of innocent people. I think I might need to take cover. See, Attila thinks he's magical, and he's also very superstitious. Oh-no! He might try to put a spell on us.

When I turn away, I see a light in a little shop. I run to it and go inside. When I'm inside, I start to look around, I see a bunch of inventions-in-progress. I wonder what this white stuff is for. Oh, that's gunpowder, I bet if this was ready we could fight the Hun's. Hey, that's an astrolabe, we could get on a boat and sail away. Oh yeah I got to get home! It's probably midnight over in America 2007. I'm dead. I hope I can wish myself home so that I'll be there soon.

"I wish I was in America, 2007."

-Gong Sound-

"Mom, you home?" "Yes I thought you were going to China?" "I did I saw the Huns, helped build the Great Wall of China, and I saw some great inventions." "I think you're imagining things." "But I...I don't know."

**Southwood Middle School  
Anderson County  
Chris Pridemore**

**“When the Pitcher in the Picture began to Pour I....”**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I attempted to tilt the picture back to keep water from spilling. It was too late; the room was flooded in water that shimmered like a thousand diamonds.

I rushed to the door to try to escape my watery fate. When I finally reached the large wooden door, I tried to open it. It was locked from the other side. By that time I had no idea what to do next. I thought for a split second on how to get out of my predicament. I finally came up with a plan.

I thought and looked above me. I saw a large vent above my head within reach. I thought I could escape via air ducts. I crawled into the cold, dark shaft, not accepting the fact I may perish. After five minutes of crawling aimlessly through the tunnels, the air grew crisp and cold. I found an unopened vent that I could open and escape through.

I crawled towards it and slowly began to lift it up. As soon as I did that, I fell into the same room that was painted in the picture. I was confused and utterly baffled. I realized that the hallway was in front of me, painted onto a sheet of paper into a picture frame. I was in the picture! I saw a man walking down the hallway in front of me. I attempted to get out of the picture but failed.

I thought what if I were to knock over the pitcher... in the picture. But to my disappointment, there was no water in the pitcher. I lost my chance of escaping. That's the story of the person in the picture, holding a pitcher, who couldn't escape from his watery fate.

Bamberg District I  
Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School  
Bonnie Marie Miller

Oh great, another boring essay! I sit at my desk in the classroom, staring at the blank piece of paper upon which I have to write my long, unexciting "Governor's Essay." Gee, I'll need a miracle to get this going!

I pull out a picture from my wallet - a photograph of my mom, standing in front of a temple, surrounded by thick, leafy vines. I gaze longingly at the picture, thinking of all the stories she's told me about the times she traveled around the world as a child. Oh, how I would have loved to have traveled with her, exploring the ancient temples of Thailand, the rainforests of Venezuela, the pyramids of Egypt! Suddenly, my vision blacks out, and I'm flying through time, my life flashing before my eyes, pictures whizzing past.

I tumble to the ground with a crash. My fall is cushioned by hundreds of dead, rotting leaves. I open my eyes and stare up into a canopy of thick, lush leaves. I stand up on shaky legs and look around. My eyes are instantly glued upon a large black rock. My eyes travel up, up, up, to an ancient stone face covered by centuries of lichen and moss. Wait, I think I know this place! In my mom's stories, she told me of such a place called Thailand. Though to be here now is impossible! I take slow, reverent steps through the entrance of the city. For hours I wander around, gazing at the ancient carvings and exploring the antique temples. Black spots start to cloud my vision, and I realize that I'm traveling through time again; sights and sounds pass me like bullets.

"Crunch! Ow!" My fall wasn't quite as soft this time. I pick myself up from the ground and glare at the squashed plant that had broken my fall. It looks like a regular weed, except it's twice as big! This must be Venezuela. In my mother's stories, she told me of the "larger than life" plants that inhabited the country. I explore the forest and gaze in awe at the enormous plants far taller than me - and much wider. I pluck a juicy fruit from the sagging branches of a mango tree. I climb up to the top of a tree and settle down in a comfortable fork of the tree. I munch on the fruit while watching the sinking sun spread dazzling colors of indigo, gold, and ruby across the sky. I eventually fall into a peaceful, dreamy sleep.

"Whoa!" I yell as I slightly miss tumbling headlong into a slanted stone wall. I brace myself against the structure and look around, curious to see where I've landed this time. Tall, sandy dunes greet my eyes. I slowly turn around and crane my neck up, squinting into the bright sun. A pyramid so tall it pierces the heavens fills my sight. I stand frozen for many long minutes, staring up in awe at the most immense structure I've ever seen. I then notice the heat, the scorching, blistering heat! To my right I see an opening, and I quickly dart inside, eager to escape from the heat outside. I stand for a moment to absorb the heavenly coolness and then cautiously set off down the corridor. I wander down the hall, anxious to see what lay inside the monument. As I walk along, I examine the walls of the passage. Beautiful carvings seemed to grow even more exquisite as I neared the end of the hallway. I turned the corner and stopped dead in my tracks. Wonderful, awesome, enchanting, there weren't enough words to describe what my eyes

**Williston 29 School District  
Williston-Elko Middle  
Paul T. Walkup**

### A New Slogan for South Carolina

Hello readers. As one of the writers for *America the Beautiful*, I am writing to you regarding something you may not think of often - South Carolina's state slogan. While "Smiling Faces, Beautiful Places" is good, I believe my slogan, "Little Towns, Big Hearts" will really put South Carolina on the map.

"Little towns" is appropriate for the slogan because South Carolina is mostly little towns spread everywhere. No matter where you are there are lots of little country stores and restaurants. Most of the people farm or do something related to all the many types of plants and animals we have. All the many different types of little towns and people keep the state unique.

The one thing that won't change no matter where you go in South Carolina is how much kindness and southern hospitality there is. That is why "big hearts" is appropriate. The people here are calm and friendly. We are also caring, loyal, and compassionate. The many traits South Carolinians share is what makes this state a great place to be.

The final reason my slogan needs to replace the old one is that it will attract tourists better. People will want to come to relax and unwind in the scenic little country towns where time seems to stand still. They will also love the kind people that they meet when they get here. While they relax, they can visit all the country stores and restaurants we have. As you can see, my slogan will do a much better job of bringing people in than the old one.

Hopefully, with the support of dedicated readers like you, my slogan will be on the back of every South Carolina license plate soon. So write to the SC Chamber of Commerce if you agree that it is better. I also hope you spread the word about it as well. Tell everyone how South Carolina has "Little Towns, Big Hearts". Thanks so much for your time.

**Guinyard-Butler Middle School  
Barnwell County  
Marion Trudeau**

**“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...”**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour I gazed at it, entranced. I was at a museum with my mother and father, watching the first ever moving portrait. It was hard to believe that the picture was not real. The pitcher lifted up, and poured out some milk.

Suddenly, the pitcher started falling slowly down to the bottom of the picture, the milk splashing out and splattering the backdrop. I expected it to land at the end of the portrait, but it kept falling. I tried to catch it as it toppled out of the frame. The pitcher slipped out of my hands and fell to the ground, shattering. I let out a gasp. This portrait was extremely valuable, and now it was ruined! Everyone would blame me. Taking the pitcher, I hurried away.

My first idea was to find some glue. I thought, where do you get glue in a museum? Then an idea came to me. There was a children’s art project being held downstairs! They would have some glue. So I sprinted down the stairs into the lobby. I saw the sign saying “Children’s Crafts”. The arrow pointed down a long, narrow hallway ending in a brightly colored door. I could see children making crafts. A bottle of tacky glue stood on the table nearest me. I snuck in and grabbed the glue.

I had to find a place to glue the pitcher together. As I rushed upstairs, a deserted hallway caught my eye. It was the perfect place. So I sat in a corner and took out the broken pitcher. The pieces were like a puzzle, and a very hard one. I got all the pieces together, but had to hold them together until the glue dried. At last, it was repaired and dry.

I ran back to the painting. As I approached the painting I carefully removed the pitcher from my backpack. When I finally stood in front of the picture I looked up and gasped. There was still a pitcher in it! It rose up and began to fall again, down to the floor. I winced as it smashed. A custodian in a red uniform came from around the corner and swept up the pieces, muttering “stupid painting...” Shocked, I looked at the name under the picture and groaned. The name was “The Falling Pitcher”.

**Hilton Head Island Middle School**  
Beaufort County  
**Weston Mott**

**When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I reached in and held a cup under the flow of precious liquid. In its contents was the key to immortality and the power of the deities themselves. It was the blood of the gods, Ichor. When drunk, it would bestow immortality and power to the drinker. The cup in my hand, I froze, and thought back to my journey here, and came to a decision.

I had been looking for this picture for years but, to no avail. Just as I had been on the brink of abandoning my quest, I became cognizant of a peculiar looking door. It was made of burnished bronze and it was flush with the wall as if no one wanted it to be noticed. Curious, I opened it and crept up the creaky wooden stairs. As I neared the decaying door at the top of the old stairs, I saw a faint stream of light emitting from behind the door. Intrigued, I eased open the aged door and let my eyes play over the miniscule room. It was not what you would call a room, barely four paces across. It was covered in filth and grime and smelled of rot, but in that disgusting room, the most valuable thing could be found.

That priceless, valuable thing was a three dimensional portrait that could bring about everlasting life and power beyond imagination. Inside the polished gold frame was a space of about three feet square, and in that space there were two cups and a pitcher. The pitcher was nondescript, but well made. One cup was made of jewel studded gold, while the other was hewn from plain stone and poorly made. If one were to drink from the gold cup, they would be killed. If one were to drink using the stone cup, they would gain the deities' powers. So, I could drink out of the fancy and fitting cup, and die or I could drink from the dirty stone cup, and have immortality and power bestowed upon me. I thought I knew which one I, or anyone else, would choose.

But as I thought back to my journey, I realized that I really didn't want to live forever. Sure, the power factor had lured me like bait lures a fish, but I really liked to live my life on the edge and with no regrets because I never knew when I'd be forced to stop. But if I cannot die, then what shall I do for eternity? To sit up there, wherever that may be, after I had drunk this elixir, and do nothing, forever? That didn't appeal to me as much as it had. I had realized that despite that I had used my muscles and bones to get here, I had enjoyed the adventure. So I chose to put the cup down, and left behind immortality and power without so much as a glance, to enjoy life's adventure before I too, was forced to stop.



**College Park Middle  
Berkeley County  
Maria Figueroa**

**“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I ...”**

“Oh, it’s beautiful, Maria!” yet another voice exclaimed from somewhere behind me. I couldn’t help the smile erupting across my face. “Isn’t it, though?” I said, clasping my hands together in what amounted to the epitome of faux joy. A chuckle reverberated through the small crowd gathered in the Classical Art room of the museum.

I looked fondly upon the canvas I’d diligently and painstakingly covered with color and shape. It truly was my greatest yet. I took in the beauty of the woman painted in a bright blue dress, the pitcher of tea in her hand. I surprised myself by marveling at my own work.

I swallowed thickly, memories causing tears. “I-I’d like everyone to leave, please,” I said in a loud voice. “Thank you all for coming.”

There was silence; an outbreak of murmuring; and then footfalls. In time, they’d all left. I glanced back at the canvas, taking in a few more details: bright red lips, glittering ice cubes, beautiful smile; this was how I remembered Mom. I stroked the cold canvas, and memories came flooding back, a plethora of warm feelings.

“I wish I could talk to you, just once more,” I whispered, closing my eyes.

“Oh, Sweetheart, I didn’t know you’d miss me so much!”

“But Mom – ” I stopped abruptly, eyes snapping open. There, on the canvas, was my mother, smiling wide with arms crossed over her chest. I blinked. Blinked again. And then promptly began spluttering incoherently.

“Really, Maria, don’t tell me I’m the first to talk?” Mom asked with a laugh. I couldn’t do anything but nod.

“Well, don’t just stand there silent! I only have a few minutes.” When the pitcher in the picture started to pour tea, I gasped. I could hear the ice clinking on the glass! The liquid cascading down! I looked at Mom. She smiled.

“I have a minute or two, dear,” she said softly.

“I love you, Mommy,” I said, voice wavering. “And I miss you so much.” My mother smiled and took a sip of her tea.

“I love you too, Sweetheart. And I’m very proud of you.” She was all smiles. “To think: my rambunctious little Maria; an artsy New York sophisticate! It’s mind blowing, to say the least.”

A small chuckle found its way through my throat, feeling dry from holding back tears. A sniff followed, keeping them back. I opened my mouth to speak, but only silence fell from my suddenly parched lips. What to say to a woman who had been gone for almost two decades? I didn’t think that striking up conversation with paintings was a common occurrence. I tried again.

“I-what-how is this happening?” The words fell from my lips and onto the floor; I hadn’t the courage, or sanity left, to look into bright green eyes. The fact that I had created them was irrelevant.

“Maria,” A warm, comforting voice.

I had no choice but to look up.

“Honey, when there’s enough love, anything can happen.”

I nodded. It was as simple as that. My voice failed once more, tears having restricted my throat and commandeered my eyes, turning them into overflowing pools of brown.

Silenced reigned for few moments, the sounds of uneven breaths and the sharp, quiet noise made by ice in an empty glass breaking it so often. Somewhere distant, both in mind and space, I heard a clock chime the hour. My mother’s voice.

“Maria, honey?”

I glanced upward again, feeling slightly consoled by the warm tone of her voice.

“I have to go. You be good, now. And come talk to me whenever you want. I’ll be listening.”

Before I could utter a good-bye, she was gone; back into oils and rough cloth. I shed my last tear and closed my eyes. She was gone, but I wasn’t alone.

**John Ford Middle School**

**Calhoun County**

**JoHannah Wright**

**“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I ...”**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I took my hand and touched the picture; suddenly I was being pulled by an unnatural force into the picture. The picture pitcher is still pouring, but now it was pouring on me. I thought quickly and tried to push it up, but it didn't budge one inch. I looked down at my hands and saw that they are toy-sized, I checked to see what else has changed on me. Soon I realized that my whole body has shrunk to the size of a Barbie doll.

I look outside the picture frame and see my best friend staring at the picture of the pitcher pouring water next to me, a doll figure. I wondered, how I can get her attention? I started screaming and hitting the glass of the picture, but she doesn't turn around, she just walks away. Now I am tired and thirsty, so I take a sip of water from the pouring pitcher and sit down to think of a plan.

It's almost four-thirty and that's when the art gallery closes. Now I wish that Paris and I never snuck out to come to the art gallery after our parents said “no.” I should have listened to them, but no, I had to come see the art gallery. I started crying.

All of a sudden I see a prince coming near me with a handkerchief asking me if I was alright. I was so stunned by his appearance that I started drooling on myself. He said again, “Madam are you alright?”

“Oh yes, I'm sorry I didn't see you there.” I said and grabbed his handkerchief.

“You can keep it if you like. Are you new because I have never seen you around here before?”

I told him my story from the beginning to the present. He asked “If you needed help, then why didn't you say so?”

He then took my hand and we jumped out of the picture and he said “The pleasure was mine.” and left me in the gallery. I looked down and saw that I was life-sized again. I jumped up and down because I was free and I could go home. Spainella wake up. “What?” I asked. Paris said “Were you having a bad dream or something?” I screamed “Do you know how glad I am to see you and yes, I think I was having a bad dream.”

“So do you still want to sneak out to the art gallery?” she asked. “No, not after the dream I had,” I said sitting up ready to explain my dream to Paris.

**Cario Middle School  
Charleston County School District  
Zack Kreber**

Today is May 16, 2076 or even better known as my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. I thought that being 79 was hard, Well, it was, but nothing like being 80. I have diabetes ever since the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. I was hard for me then but now there is no comparison.

I still have to do finger pricks and shots, but now I have to take medicine to help prevent me from bleeding too much. Every two months I am required to go to the clinic for a check-up on my diabetes. This is not an easy task. My vision and memory are not what they used to be. It is difficult for me to see signs and stop lights and even turn signals. With my bad memory I often forget the roads or even why I'm in the car in the first place.

My memory doesn't only affect my driving, but most anything you can think of. I forgot to check my blood sugar or take my shots and my medication. I find it pointless to have medicine to help me remember things when I can't remember to take it.

Over time when you are around my age you will feel rather technologically challenged. You won't be able to figure out how anything works. I often find myself wondering what it does. I used to have an aptitude of this type of thing. I guess it just atrophied away.

My work life is impossible. I need money to pay for my medication. The problem, though, is that I am 80 years old! I cannot remember to go to work. I think I am lucky honestly. When I go I am almost always in pain.

Being 80 years old is not a walk in the park. Everything you can do as a kid you cannot do at my age. You have to be strong. If you make the right choices when you're younger you'll be fine. Everything I have explained is what it is like to be 80.

School of the Arts  
Charleston County  
Joseph Pate

**When the Pitcher in the Picture Began to Pour, I ...**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I began to feel homesick. The smell of tea flooded my senses, and my mind wandered back to the small cottage I used to call home. As I stared at the picture I thought about life before the war, a time when drinking sweet tea on a porch was a way to escape the heat of a harsh, South Carolina summer. Life in this lonely refugee camp just isn't the same. I longed to be back under the Charleston sun, and away from this chilling wind.

It is the year 1864, and the War Between the States has taken everything from me; my home, possessions, and the life I am used to. While muskets were shot at Fort Sumter, the house I called home was in flames. A canon fired, and the shell landed in the courtyard, causing the fire that would ruin my life. The small cottage that I called home was nothing more than ashes. I was quickly moved to a camp in Virginia, along with others that became homeless.

Every day I sit wondering when the war will end, but there is no end in sight. And the Virginia winter is almost as unforgiving as a Charleston summer, with freezing winds that move their way through my thin jacket and chill me to my bones. I now wish the war would end more than ever.

My uncle is the only one still in Carolina, and he sends postcards and pictures every now and then. He also sends information on the progress of the war, as no one here ever speaks of it. Most of the news is grim, as many people are slain in this war that is going nowhere.

Finally some good news arrives, in the form of a postcard from my uncle. The card has a picture of a tea pitcher, and I start to feel homesick. But when I turn the card over, I am filled

with joy. The message says that it is safe to leave this cold camp and go back to Charleston for a new life.

James Island Middle School  
Charleston County  
**Isabel Raisbeck**

## **When The Pitcher In the Picture Began to Pour, I...**

"Art," my teacher began, "is one of the many beauties of life." Our art teacher took all of us on the bus where the seats were filled with unhappy students. We were on our way to an art gallery. This was our first field trip and I was very disappointed.

"Mr.Killagan, nobody likes *art*," I heard from the back of the bus.

"Well, you children don't look deep enough into the picture," Mr.Killagan replied, "Where's your imagination?" The bus went silent. Right as he opened his mouth to say something else, the bus slammed everyone's face into the seat in front of them. In front of us was Jaspers Art Gallery. The walls were painted with colorful murals, there were no windows, and in the center was one, little, yellow, door.

Once everyone managed to get through the door, we all stared in amazement. Paintings and sculptures, different shapes and sizes, were everywhere. There were six sections, all leading in a circle back to the main room. We were allowed to roam as long as we had our buddy. My buddy, Chad, and I went into section four, Mystery Art. The first thing Chad noticed was the boy's room and he was off.

While I waited for him I looked at a painting called, Picnic. I examined every part of it. The food looked great and the drinks looked refreshing, almost like they were real. There were two boys, one eating and the other pouring lemonade out of a pitcher. I reached over, just to touch this painting but right when I touched the checkered blanket, the picture came to life! The strong wind blew out the picture and rustled through my braids. When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I felt the lemonade soak up my socks as it poured right out of the picture.

I stepped away from the picture when I noticed something in the corner of my eye. This wasn't the only thing coming to life; everything was. I couldn't understand what was happening; I was in shock and disbelief. As I ran from those paintings and sculptures into the fantasy section, section five, I could feel the lemonade inside my sneakers. Nothing was moving in the fantasy section, but I could hear the mystery characters tracking me down. I started to run again, I didn't know where I was going, but I just kept going until I was back in the mystery art section. I knew exactly where to go.

When I busted in the bathroom, Chad, was washing his hands.

"The paintings are alive," I yelled, pointing to the door, "out there!" He looked puzzled.

"What are *you* doing in the guy's room?"

I told him that it doesn't matter and that if he doesn't believe me, he should go see for himself. Without a second thought he went out there, leaving me. About five minutes later he came back in.

"Nothings even out there, chicken." I walked out of the bathroom to see how right he was. The pictures were on the wall, not alive. Suddenly I heard Mr.Killagan's voice.

"Time to leave," he said. Before I left section four I looked back at Picnic. The boy with the pitcher winked at me. I smiled then I winked back, then my teacher said,

"Did any of you find your lost imagination?" I was standing on the stares when I responded, "Yeah, I did." Then I stepped off the last step of imagination onto the sidewalk of reality.



**Blacksburg Middle School  
Cherokee County  
Jaime Blanton**

**Moving Picture**

My sister and I were spending the night with my Grandma, one rainy Saturday night. We were getting so bored, so we decided to play hide-and-seek. She made me count seeing on how I am the youngest. She always did that!

I counted silently in the bedroom while she ran to hide. When I finally reached one hundred I opened the door and shouted, "Ready or not here I come!"

I was on my way to find her, creeping past each corner but when I turned to look down one hallway I saw a picture and I could tell that it wasn't normal. I walked slowly toward it and when I got closer I saw that it was moving!

There, in the picture, was a pitcher that had begun to pour, I stopped to watch it. In the same picture there was a child sitting at a table and a mother who was holding the pitcher. It seemed as if they were in a kitchen but instead of the floor being tile, it was all water. The mother and the boy seemed very upset, but not with each other. In the window there was a man who was furious and he looked just like the son.

The man seemed very upset and the woman had bruises on her arms and face. The water wasn't coming straight from the pitcher. The water was tears pouring into the pitcher, then on to the floor. The woman was busy trying to dry her tears from the floor. The man had disappeared for just a moment, but then reappeared with a match. The man threw the match onto the house but it wouldn't catch fire because of the tears put the fire out. He left furious, but the women and child were safe. Who would have ever thought that a women's grief could save her life! The women just held the child in her arms and the picture stopped.

My sister shouted, "I'm ready!"

So I walked off, uneasy from the sight I just saw, and went to find my sister. After I finally found my sister I went to my Grandma and asked her if she had ever seen this picture move. She had never seen such a thing, but she did tell me that was what had happened with her Grandma and Grandpa.

I went back later on that same night to see if it would move again but it didn't. I couldn't believe that it really moved! I kept thinking about that picture and what would have happened if the tears weren't there. I just can't believe something like that really happened!

Chester Middle School  
Chester County  
Meghan Nelson

“When the pitcher began to pour, I . . .

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I looked around to make sure no one was around me at the Historic African Slave Museum. It was filled with pictures that had been painted during slavery time. This certain picture was of many African slaves eating together and an older woman was pouring lemonade. When the picture came alive, the older woman looked at me and said, “What’cha waitin child? Com’n in, we been waitin on ya!” Scared, I jumped in the picture. Now, I was a slave in slave time. WHOA!

This should be easy, I thought. To work, eat, and sleep. I assumed slaves had had a pretty good life because they had been brought to America. I thought they should have been thankful. My parents and grandparents always told me that I was better than other races, so I looked down on them. I was soon to learn that things aren’t always what they seem. I really have to admit that right now, I was scared, terrified. I couldn’t tell my master that I wasn’t from this century and I somehow “time-traveled”. So now, I had to go along being a slave.

I didn’t think being a slave would be as hard as it was! It wasn’t fair that I had to do what other people told me without any choice. I didn’t *ask* for this to happen to me...and neither did any of the other slaves...Oh my gosh! I cannot believe how rude and self-centered I had been. I didn’t have any sympathy whatsoever for a people that had been so greatly mistreated for quite some time. I had to go through a taste of their lifestyle before I began to respect them. How ignorant I had been. I was better than no

one! I had a fantastic life; I wasn't kidnapped from my home and forced to live under a boat and tortured. No one, not even an animal deserved to be treated like that. After all of this realization, I realized more: I had to figure out a way to get home!

After I finished working that day, I went to my bed and thought for hours, somewhat of remorse and the rest of a plan. Then, I fell asleep, and just as I had fallen asleep, I awoke at home. Sitting up in my bed, I thought hard about the dream I just had. Would I let this dream change me or would I just ignore it? That was the question that would decide my future. I think we all know what I chose to do.

**New Heights Middle School  
Chesterfield County School District  
Lisa Martin**

Once, a long time ago, about seventy years, a young girl was lying on her twin sized bed. The lights were dim, and shadows played across the floor. She could hear music faintly from where it was playing in her mother's bedroom just down the hall. The young girl sighed despairingly as she looked around her at the depressing room. Everything was black, sickening black, the rug, the walls, and even the bed covers. The girl had hoped, oh how she had hoped, she would have been able to redecorate her room for her fifteenth birthday, but her hopes had been slashed to pieces by her stepfather. How she wished her real father was still alive.

Her drawings were the only things that brightened her dark room. Sometimes the pictures were the only things that kept her sane.

The girl's throat was so dry. How she wished for some nice cool liquid to quench her terrible thirst. She would even be willing to drink that horrid cranberry juice. But as long as her stepfather was still awake, she was too scared to dare venture out of her confining room. Though it was only a few steps to the kitchen, it might as well have been a vast desert.

Hoping to distract herself, she glanced around the room at her beloved pictures, the ones her father had helped her draw. When her gaze fell upon the one with the pitcher in it, her mouth began to water. Ahh, her own saliva tasted so wonderful at the moment.

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, the fifteen year old tumbled off her bed and onto the floor with a thunderous crash. She scrambled to the far corner of her bedroom where she curled into a ball with her arms over her head. There she waited tensely for her raging madman of a stepfather to come bursting in.

When nothing happened, she crawled hesitantly back over to the picture of the blue pitcher that she must have imagined pouring something. Her mind was racing, thinking of all the books she had read about things coming to life by reading them and the magic movies she had watched with her dad about conjuring objects you desired, but the had been fiction. It couldn't be true. It just couldn't, yet when she felt the rug below the picture, it was quite soggy.

Slowly, a sad-sweet smile spread across her face. Finally, she could call things to life just by looking at something she desired. The smile faded as the thought that she couldn't bring her father back to life crossed her mind. Feeling vulnerable, she walked over to the cracked mirror on the back of her locked and bolted door.

When she looked into the mirror, she saw an almost perfect image of her father looking back. Tall and skinny with his small delicate nose, his wide twinkling honey-brown eyes, his curly cinnamon colored hair, the light spray of tiny freckles, and the full red lips. At last, she had something other than the features to remind her of the father she had lost, something that couldn't grow dim overtime, the thing he had valued most. She had her father's magic.

Suddenly, there was a loud splintering sound and she whirled around to find her stepfather standing in the doorway. His face was red with rage, his shirt only half tucked in, and his greasy black hair in disarray. He was shouting at the top of his lungs and his eyes were bulging out of the sockets. Then he turned on his heel to go get the dreaded belt.

To her great surprise, she realized that since the first time she had layed eyes on her stepfather that she wasn't scared to death. When he returned expecting to find a girl

shrinking back in fear, he found one who was standing tall, her chin raised defiantly with her long hair tossed back out of her face. The girl had found not only her father's magic, but also his strength.

The young girl's life changed forever when the pitcher in the picture began to pour. That night all those years ago was a beginning to a whole new life for her.

**Scott's Branch Middle School  
Clarendon County  
Belinda York**

**You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain what era you visited and explain why.**

If I could travel back to any era in the world, it would be to the 1960's. I think that traveling there would be a really cool thing to do. I've heard so much about the 60's from my family members, and it sounds really interesting! They always say that back then things were a little better than it is now. Even though they tell me many things about the 60's, there are two specific things that I would love to see.

Have you ever thought about the way we dance? I have plenty of times. I mean by seeing how we dance now I wonder how they used to dance back in "the day". I bet that if we saw some older people dance that lived the 60's, we would probably laugh really loud. You know, even if we did laugh, you have to remember that the kind of dancing they used to do was "all that" in the 60's.

I've always thought about the way we dress ourselves too. Every time I go in the clothes store and look at the different clothes, I wonder how people dressed in the 60's. I wonder if they had those crazy looking boots back then! Sometimes I think that the women wore nothing but dresses with petticoats! I couldn't wear dresses or shoes like that if I had lived the 60's. No doubt!

Sometimes, I just go to my aunts and uncles and ask them these things. I remember when I asked one of my uncles about the way they used to dance, he told me how they used to "swing and twist". One day my uncle wanted to show me how to do something called the Mashed-Potato. At first I didn't know what he was talking about, but I let him teach me how to do it anyway, and it was a fun, but a wacky kind of dance to me. Then, one of my aunts showed me some boots, a skirt, and a shirt that she loved to wear back in the day> It looked crazy!!

With the way that we think about how people dressed and danced in the 60's, I wonder how our styles and dance moves will seem like in the future. I mean, in the future kids our age could think that what we wore and how we dance is whack and crazy. Then again you never know, after our time things might never change. I'm probably wrong though, things might change and children will start laughing about what we used to do just like we laugh at what people tell us about what they use to do in the 60's. I think

that going back to the 60's would be great, even though I'd probably laugh at certain things I observed.



**Manning Junior High School  
Clarendon County  
Jillian Benton**

**“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I.....”**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I grabbed a mop and began to clean up the spill. Working 3<sup>rd</sup> shift in a museum is hard work. Sometimes the strangest things happen here at Stone Mountain Museum. At night on a full moon, sometimes, the pictures come alive. Believe me if you want to, but they really do!

Well tonight it's a full moon, and I have a full night ahead of me. After I put the mop up, the boy in the *Blue Boy* painting began to scream. Then, the *Light of Peace* painting began to beam as brightly as the sun and blinded me. Next, the Van Gogh and the Mona Lisa paintings began chatting with each other. All this ruckus and confusion was just getting started and was already starting to drive me crazy. Most times they only come alive for a couple of minutes, then stop. However, tonight they have been going at it for hours. Most times I don't usually bother them unless they get too loud.

Therefore, when Van Gogh and Mona Lisa began yelling at each other, I had to see what all the commotion was about. They were arguing because the Franklin D. Roosevelt statue was humming. Mona Lisa thought he was humming “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” and Van Gogh thought he was humming “Baa, Baa Black Sheep.” I had to intervene because they were both wrong. He wasn't even humming; he was wailing because the eight monkeys stole his hat. This kamikaze had been going on too long, and I was just fed up.

“SHUT UP! GO BACK IN YOUR PICTURES!” I yelled. Everyone came to a complete halt, and they looked at me as if I had killed someone. After staring at me for another three minutes, they slowly went back in their right frames. “Whew!” I said. “That's a load off my shoulders.” It was 5:51 A.M., and I was ready to go home after a very long night.

**East Clarendon Middle School  
Clarendon County  
Farrel Godwin**

## **You Traveled to a Different Era to Relive History**

One day a few years back, I woke up in the 1950's. I did not know where I was or what had brought me to this place. I kept asking myself – How did I get here? Where was I? Was I dreaming? I was really scared. I really did think I was dreaming, but what actually happened was I was stolen by an evil villain in my sleep and pretty much sent into the 1950's.

The 1950's was a magnificent era. There was oldie's music, shag dancing, and the beginning of rock and roll. There was Elvis Presley, Chairmen of the Board, The Temptations, and all kinds of music that my grandparents grew up listening to.

The clothes were different looking and they were very colorful. Many ladies wore wide belts, and men wore narrow belts. Also girls were not allowed to wear pants to school.

The 1950's was not just different clothing wise. A lot of people had no TV. Rock and Roll was just beginning, and life was now changing in a lot of ways, not only clothing wise and the beginning of rock and roll, but the people.

In the 1950's I met a lot of people such as Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, and people of that sort. My mom, so to call was Jayn and my so to call dad was Peter. My friends were Julli, Glam, Gen, and Susan. They said they were my friends so I guess they were. The 1950's were cool and funky, and there were laws I would have never dreamed of such as being arrested when one did the dirty shag. But other than that, it was great.

In the 1950's I learned to do a lot of things my friends did such as going to the candy shop and buying what they called penny candy, eating hamburgers and drinking milk shakes, and all sorts of things like that at the Malt Shop.

In summary, the 1950's was a fun experience, and I finally realized that I was just dreaming. But one thing was great about all the things in that era. All I had to do was be myself.

**Forest Circle Middle School  
Colleton County  
Camden Wiggins**

**You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain what era you visited and explain why.**

ZAPP!! I can feel myself being pulled inside of it. What is IT?!? Stop freaking out and think. The last thing I remember was opening a book from old Mr. Wetershine's library. Now, I'm shaking so much. Holy cow, I can't see; it turned me blind!! No, no my eyes are just closed. My eyes slowly opened. How am I still in the library? I am so disoriented. I mean, I see a blue light outside with numbers speeding by so quickly that I can't read them. BOOM!

The library slammed to a stop and outside the sun was shining so brightly that I had to wince just to see outside. Then, as I began to gain back my sanity I decided to go back to my house. I opened the door and ran outside. Where was I?

The door led to the brown cobblestone street laid around twenty to thirty gray brick houses. I frantically began to scurry down the street in search of some possibility that I could be helped. Everyone around me spoke as though they had a cold or were German or something. I began to sprint as fast as I could and tripped on a loose stone. I stumbled down the end of the hard road and hit my head on a metal sign written in a strange language. It had dots over the letters!! I couldn't understand it. Then I came across the one word, Deutschland! I know what that means. What...wait!? Am I in GERMANY?!?!

I stumbled to my feet and ran back to the house where I came. Then I saw THEM coming. They were marching in straight lines with a black ensign that looked like a window with pieces cut out. Everyone stopped and chanted HAIL HITLER as the soldiers raised their arms to a 120 degree angle and their hands remained straight. The sound grew louder and louder until I couldn't take it and ran back down the street. In all of this excitement, the very book

slipped from my arms and hid in the road where the people were marching on. Before I realized this, it was too late. The whole brigade of soldiers stopped suddenly and one of them reached down to pick it up.

My stomach dropped to my shoe and I kept running. I ran until everything was a blur. Then I hit my head and was knocked unconscious. I awoke in my room! My room caused my excitement to go from ten to two. How was I in my room? I glanced outside and I was in my neighborhood. It must have been a dream.

I sauntered outside to play basketball. There was a swastika on my roof! I'm not nazi. Why would there be a swastika on my house? There was an eerie feeling that it wasn't a dream! Was I still in Germany? No, this was my neighborhood. I figured that I was just delirious, so I went inside to watch television. The television showed Hitler giving an address to the union. What was this? Hitler is already dead. What happened? What! That book gave a complete outline of World War II. The Nazis found it and...they used it to help them win the war. I changed the course of history! I've got to go back! How? Hoow? Hooooow? Before I knew it, I blacked out again and was left on the couch.

Once again, I awoke on the street of the same city as before. I was under the street sign. The book was still in my hands! I slowly opened the book and was zoomed back to 2007. Frantically, I ran outside to see if that evil flag was still on my house. Sprinting onto the stoop, I cut my eyes to the roof. I did a double take to make sure that it wasn't there. My eyes remained fixed on the roof. I am never going back in time again.

**Hartsville Middle School  
Darlington County  
Emili Price**

**When the Pitcher in the Picture began to Pour, I.....**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I knew I belonged here. Here, in this bleach stained institution. I walked down the bright hall as poster after poster passed me by screaming things like “laughter is the best medicine” and “spread smiles.”

I missed home already – at least the way it used to be when people weren’t afraid of me, before I got so sick. “Sick” is how my parents describe it. I know they really mean “crazy,” but it makes them feel a little better to think that whatever is wrong with me can be cured. I doubt it can; I’ll be crazy as long as I’ll be alone – forever.

A man in a big white jacket, who called himself Mr. Smith, took me to a room covered in pink. He seemed to think I would love it here. I knew he was wrong. This would be another place where my hallucinations drove everyone away. Mr. Smith left with a quick smile and a reminder that dinner would be at six.

Slowly, I sat on a pink mattress and stared around the room. There were two beds which meant I was sharing this place with someone else. I closed my eyes, trying to imagine what my new roommate would be like, and why she would possibly be here. I hoped she wasn’t bi-polar, massive mood swings were not something I could handle. Maybe she was like me – they had no idea what was wrong with her. The only thing for certain was that I belonged here. I knew no one was like me, though. No one could possibly know what it feels like.

I didn’t get to wonder long because the door flew open and in walked the perkier girl I had ever seen. By then I knew she couldn’t be like me. She was way too happy.

She smiled and pulled me into a lung crushing hug. Gasping, I said the only thing I could think of, "Why is it so pink in here?"

Smiling even wider she said she thought it made this place a little happier. She explained that if you were optimistic, it was really not that bad here. I didn't believe a word she said until she took me by surprise, saying, "Happiness really helps make the pictures stop moving."

Confused, yet thrilled, I pulled her into another hug, knowing I would not be alone; for once, someone understood.

# **When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?**

**Lake View High School**

**Dillon County**

**Anna Johnson**

What would my life be like at the age of 80? Many people may ask this question. But finding the answer to this question can be very hard. Most people don't live to be 80. But, imagine if you did all you would have learned through those 80 years? I hope my life at 80 will be very enjoyable because I would be full of wisdom and living a peaceful life.

To start off, wisdom is very important. Without wisdom you are capable of making bad decisions. And eventually if you don't change, you can ruin your life. At the age of 80, I think you should have a lot of wisdom. At age 80, you have been through and seen "a whole lot", and hopefully learned something from them. Having wisdom is not based on your struggles, but what you learn from them. Without learning something from your situation, you will probably do it again. For example, when a toddler first sees a stove, automatically they want to touch it. Once the mother spanks the child's hand or if the child touches the stove and feels that it's hot, more than likely they won't do it again.

Next, at 80 years of age, I want an enjoyable but yet peaceful life. I don't want to have to worry and stress about material things. Yes, I know I will have some worries but I don't want to have to worry about things I could have changed. You get one life and I think it's important to live it to the fullest. When I reach 80, I want to be able to recall childhood memories. I want to remember things to help someone else out. I want to have experiences, so I can help youth succeed. I want my mistakes to change someones life in order for them not to do it. Life is not about what you can get, but more so, what you are willing to give.

In conclusion, as you can see, I didn't write I wanted big houses or other material things. Material things won't last forever. But the wisdom and experiences one has will live forever. Your experiences will forever be told by others. Once I leave this Earth I want to know I did everything possible to make it a better place for me and the people I share it with.



**J.V. Martin Jr. High School  
Dillon County  
Zipporah Lighty**

**Life at Age 80**

Many people think that the older you get, the less amount of things you are able to do. Well, that's not what I think. I think that the older you get, the more opportunities are opened to you.

For instance, if you go buy groceries at the store, and a worker sees an old lady going out the door carrying her groceries, they come and carry your bags and put them in your car for you.

I think that being older would have its bright points and its dull points. One of the bright points would be being waited on by your family. Most of the time, when people get older, their children decide that they need to take over and wait on you. That's the way I think my life would be at the age of 80.

The only bad thing about having to be 80 is that I won't be going out and shooting hoops or playing volleyball like I had done when I was younger. I think that I'll still be getting out and about. I don't expect to look like the average 80 year old person. I'll still have that pep in my step, and nothing much will be able to slow me down.

I couldn't see myself having age spots and those peculiar disease that old people get. I think that if I reach 80, I won't have wrinkles, but not because of plastic surgery.

Some people think they can't have fun playing games. I think my favorite game would be Twister. You're thinking that no old person can get around like that. I might end up playing and beating my grandchildren in a game or two. Another one of my favorites would be video games.

A lot of old people don't have jobs, but I can think of about two that I would do.

Since I like volleyball and basketball, I probably wouldn't mind being a volleyball coach or a basketball coach. Ever since I was little, I've dreamed of catching a criminal. The police or the FBI probably wouldn't hire me, even if I did have a degree. I can see myself speeding down the road, in a squad car, after a criminal. The criminal would pull over and start running. Then, I would get out and start after him. I catch and pepper-spray him all in his face.

Then again, life at 80 might be the exact opposite of what I think. I hope it won't though!

Alston Middle School  
Dorchester 2 School District  
James A. Woods

## A Pitcher In A Picture

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I knew I wasn't in Kansas anymore, so to speak. Where was I? I looked around to find myself in a long hallway. The walls were golden and had other moving pictures on them. I started to walk and looked at some of the pictures. I saw one with a hummingbird flying around a garden that seemed to be surrounded by a wall of white marble. Another showed a person dressed all in red writing on parchment and referring back to a globe. Then, I noticed a door at the end of the hallway. It looked like it was made of silver. Before I knew what I was doing, I ran to the door and opened it. I thought the door would be heavy and hard to open, because it was made of silver, but it swung open easily.

"Hello Jimmy, my name is Blar." This was said by a person standing in front of me. He looked to be about my age, with black hair and brown eyes. "Welcome to Bling."

"Bling?" That was the only thing I could think of to say.

"Bling is where we are now. Don't you know that? I would have thought that you of all people should."

"Why would I know that? I've never been here before. Why am I here?"

"This is a place where those little doodles you draw when you're bored come to life." Blar said all of this with a smile on his face.

Then there was a blinding flash of light. When I could see again, I noticed another Blar standing there. He looked just like the guy I had just been talking to!

"Alright, you're busted Changer."

"Dang Blar, you always ruin the fun!" Blar 1 clapped his hands and then, starting at his feet and going upward, he changed into what I guessed was his real form. He now had blonde hair and green eyes and looked to be around fifteen years old.

The Blar that had appeared with the flash of light turned to me.

"I am the real Blar. Wizard Extraordinaire of Bling, Keeper of the Peace, Protector of the Gateway Between the Realms, Ambassador to the Flaer Islands and the Rockfeln Kingdom, et cetera, et cetera." Wow, that was a lot to process.

"I'm Jimmy. Um, I have no titles to speak of."

So many questions were in my mind. They were like a crowd of people all talking at once. I could not think straight. I blurted out one.

"I've drawn all of these things, I think. Why haven't I been here before?"

"Oh, there's a good reason."

"Really? What is it?"

"Bling does not exist. None of this is real. You are daydreaming in class. You had better snap out of it before it is too late!" Bling was suddenly replaced by the sight of my teacher!

"Jimmy, pay attention!"

Well, so much for that. It might make a good story though. What do you think?

**St. George Middle School  
Dorchester County  
Asia R. Folk**

**When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?  
Subtitle: Diary of An 80-Year-Old**

Forces and snow boots that looked like live creatures on my size 9 feet, have gone out of style. My adolescence years have passed. The activities that once were exciting now are a thing of the past. MacDonald's Big Mac's, have lost their unique taste. And Beyonce and Jay-Z have been separated for a while. Gray strands of hair, stoutness, and some wrinkles accompany me, and a few moles here and there that looks like little raisins on my face.

I've grown old and tired but still enjoying life. Sitcoms such as *That's So Raven* and *The Simpson's* show re-runs. As I sit in my 3-story condo, which is located in Rome, Italy in my pink nightgown with ruffles hanging from the bottom and bunny slippers, cutting and cleaning collards for the afternoon dinner at 12 and telling stories to my grandchildren Anastasia, Morgan, Cory, and Ryan. It excites me to hear the laughter of my grandchildren's tongues. It makes me think of all the times when Viandra, Khadija and I would laugh at the idiotic actions our fellow classmates would do. I now enjoy going grocery shopping at the nearest department store. My eldest son Trevonee and I search the store for goods such as peaches, jelly and butter to make my historical combination of natural fruits and jelly.

My husband Elijah of 54 years and I, baby-sit our only great-grandchild Monique. Her little puff makes me reminisce of my youth days with that same old puff. She reminds me of myself so. She loves to listen to her Nanny and Papa fuss over stupid things such as who cooks dinner tonight. I always win. At 12:30 we enjoy *The Young and the Restless* on CBS. We sit on our sofa and eat a sub sandwich in between commercials. When I was a teenager Abby was a little girl, but now she's an adult woman. Television ceases never to surprise me. Afterwards, we call her great-great-grandma Bev. She sings to her on the phone. It's amazing what the Lord can do for you. Mama is 102 and still the strongest woman I know. Daddy's somewhere, but I just don't know.

Days have become full of cooking and cleaning. Even though my eldest daughter Payton thinks I should slow it down, I keep on trucking. I turn on the radio on 94.5 and listen to spirituals that were popular in my day, Yolanda Adams, Kirk Franklin (God bless the dead.), and the Canton Spirituals. Sometimes, I call Viandra and Khadija on 3-way and we all sing together. On Wednesdays and Mondays I tend to my garden. It is full of corn, okra, string beans, tomatoes, and peppers, anything you can find in old South Carolina. I win the Rome City competition every year. Chopping up some cucumbers with salt and vinegar are a special treat.

I never would have imagined being 80 years old. Just yesterday I was "Cranking That Batman", now I'm too slow to do that. Oh, well. Going to the club has been out of life for over 40 years. But I still get down. I'm a retired journalist married to an Army

veteran and have 4 kids, Payton, Trevonee, Dasha, and Akin. They've matured and are happily married with kids except for Dasha. I don't think she'll ever have kids. She's a career woman just like her mama was. But I realized eventually, that life was more than just work. It is love, family and commitment. Becoming of age doesn't bring down your joy because getting old leads you to opportunities you never thought you would ever have, living life to the fullest.

Johnston-Edgefield-Trenton Middle School  
Edgefield County

**Brandi Jackson**

**When you are eighty years old, what will your life be like?**

Some eighty year olds might sit around on their porches in their squeaky rocking chairs complaining about what the world is like now and how much better life was back in the "good, old days." Not this eighty year old! I might move a little slower and have a few more wrinkles, but I am still going to continue the adventure that I have started.

Even though my bones may not want to cooperate with what I'm trying to do, I'm going to be a Dancin' Granny. I'll learn the popular dances like the Young Jock, Chicken Noodle Soup, and Soldier Boy. (Well, who knows what kinds of dances will be in style by then?) When I take the floor, young people will gather 'round and scream, "Go, Granny! Go, Granny! Go, Granny! Go, Granny!"

One of the greatest things about being eighty will be that when I come home at two o'clock in the morning, I won't wonder if I'm going to be punished. I've heard that older folks don't always sleep as much as the young ones do, so what will I do with all my extra time? I'll fill my nights with music and dancing.

Won't the youngsters be shocked when I arrive at social events wearing what they wear and driving what they wish they could drive? It should be easy to fit in when I sport designer clothes and sunglasses and the most popular pairs of shoes. Perhaps I'll cruise around town in a red and blue Hummer with tinted windows and twenty-six inch rims. It will also come with a television in the dashboard and, of course, a sun roof so that I can wave to all my friends who will hear the beats of today's songs booming from the speakers in the back.

My grandchildren will probably ask, "Grandma, aren't you too old for all of this?"

And I will answer, "No, I've just begun. Now, let's go have some fun. Let's sing; let's dance; let's wear out our new pants. Teach Grandma something new, something bright, something smooth. Let's all go to the park, and stay 'til after dark. Don't slow me down; let's keep going 'round and 'round."

Even when I'm eighty, I can still enjoy life, and I plan to prove it. Why wait? From this day on, I'm celebrating like every day's my birthday.

**Fairfield Middle School**

**Fairfield County School District**

**NaJahwan McKinstry**

## **Standardized Tests Are not a Benefit to Students**

Students are not benefited by standardized tests. It is not a benefit because students may not like tests, and might not feel like testing on that particular day. There are other ways that students can be graded other than testing. Standardized tests are not a good way to determine a student's knowledge. Some examples of standardized tests are the PACT, HSAP, EOC, MAP, SAT, ACT, and CRT.

Firstly, if a student does not like tests, he or she will not do well on tests. Tests can make students feel uncomfortable even though they do well on class work. A student may know all the test materials, but are nervous when it comes to tests. They may think that a test may play a big part in their grade and try to make sure everything is correct when they know it is. This might cause them to change a correct answer to an incorrect answer.

Secondly, students may not feel well on the day of a major test, but they are forced to take these tests because there will be no make-ups and this could cause them to fail. A student may not be feeling well on the day of a nine weeks test or end of course exam and make an "F", thereby forcing them to attend summer school. A student may fall asleep in class during the test because of the way they feel. Tests can play a big part in a senior's life if he/she is not feeling very well on the day of the tests.

Thirdly, I believe some tests and testing conditions may bring an unfair judgment to students. Students can be graded in many more ways other than testing. Teachers can have students create a portfolio for them so they can see their work and progress over a period of time. Portfolios can be used to look at a student's progress, because it allows a teacher to look at how a student's writing is improving over time. Also, keeping a record of students' extra curricular activities can tell you a lot about a student. All of these methods can be used to show how well rounded a student is.

Finally, tests play many important roles in students' lives, which I think is not necessary. Tests should not be a bigger percent of your overall grade. All work should equal the same amount. Students think they have to do excellent on tests in order to pass a class. On these notes, I strongly say standardized tests are not a benefit to students.



**Sneed Middle School**

Florence County

**John Moose**

**As a writer for the magazine, *America the Beautiful*, your assignment is to create a new slogan for South Carolina and write an article using the slogan.**

**“The grass is always greener, the air is always cleaner, and the life is always better in South Carolina.”**

South Carolina is on the east coast of the U.S. near the warm Atlantic Ocean. It is a wonderful place to live or visit. South Carolina offers beautiful landscapes, charm and opportunities. The residents in South Carolina make it a truly special place.

South Carolina is a beautiful state. It has many landscapes including: beaches, marshes, lakes, forests, and foothills. South Carolina is famous for its white, sandy beaches and beautiful lakes. Its vast marshes and forests are filled with abundant and varied wildlife. South Carolina is a place offering classic country sides, charming towns, vast farmland, and scenic mountains. It is a place of adventure offering many water sports, hunting and fishing, and other outdoor activities. South Carolina also has many great cities that offer a variety of other types of adventure.

The residents of South Carolina are among the most friendly and neighborly. They are generous and volunteer their time and effort to help those that are less fortunate. Newcomers are easily welcomed into the community. Neighbors are valued and treasured like family. There are many towns where the residents feel the community is more like a family.

South Carolina offers many diverse life styles and job opportunities. South Carolinians value education, and there are great educational opportunities, including

several outstanding colleges and universities. South Carolina offers many employment opportunities. Technological opportunities are abundant in the upstate region of South Carolina and the Universities. There are a large number of agricultural careers available, as well. Tourism based careers are also abundant in the state.

South Carolina is not just only a place. It is a beautiful state that offers adventure. It is a warm and friendly place where neighbors are like family. It is a land varying numerous employment opportunities. The grass is always greener, the air is always cleaner, and life is always better in South Carolina. South Carolina is not just a place to live or visit, but a way of life.

**Hannah-Pamplico Elementary/Middle School  
Florence County  
Chelsea Matthews**

**Roaring Twenties**

“Shut up! Leave me alone!” That’s the last thing I remember before I ran into the basement. I really didn’t feel like fighting with my sister anymore so I looked around. Mostly it was just a bunch of old junk. “Huh, wouldn’t hurt to bring a broom down here.” I mumbled. I couldn’t remember the last time I had been in this basement, my brother use to live here until he moved out three years ago. All of the sudden, I saw a phone booth. Knowing I should call my best friend and tell her about the fight, I did. The booth was awesome kind of like it just came out of the 1920’s. I was overwhelmed to see it worked. I punched in the numbers, 610-1920, but the phone never rang. “Ugh, piece of junk phone booth”! I yelled. All of the sudden, I began moving, but I couldn’t see anything. I started screaming “help me, please help”! Then everything stopped. That was how my nightmare began.

I woke up in the phone booth and some old lady was hovering over me asking me if I was homeless. I replied.

“No, I’m perfectly fine.”

I looked all around and realized I wasn’t in our basement anymore! I examined the buildings, clothes, and cars. This wasn’t 2007. I remembered a school report I was doing. It was about the 1920’s. These people were dressed just like in my report. They wore flappers and cloche hats, and drove Model-T cars. I dug around in my pocket and found \$23.17. I laughed. “This would be enough to buy a house!” I went to a local store called Bolly’s because I couldn’t find a Wal-Mart around. Bolly’s was pretty nice. I went and

bought a pair of flappers and a cloche hat. I tied my hair up so my hair would look really short. Then, I pulled my hat way down because foreheads were very unfashionable. I walked outside to try and use that "phone booth" again. To my surprise it was gone. "This is really getting annoying!" I yelled. Everyone looked up at me like I had gone insane. I walked all around hoping to find any phone booth. Reluctantly, I found one. I tried calling my house, but all I got was a busy signal. After gaining the courage, I asked someone if this was Forks Town. A woman replied.

"Yes, would you like me to help you find something?"

"No, it's ok." I said.

Since I knew I was in Forks, I went to where my house was supposed to be. But there was nothing there but an old building. I sat on an ancient bench and thought. What am I going to do? How am I going to tell my mom I was late for supper? Then, the big question came. Would I ever get another one of my mom's suppers?

I was so worried and beating myself up; I didn't realize how hungry I was. I went to a takeout restaurant called John's. It was really good. I counted my money. I had \$16.53 left. I tried hard to think about how I was getting home. I walked around a couple of little stores but didn't buy much. I met up with that old lady. She asked me if I needed a place to stay. "It's the best offer yet," I replied.

We drove to her house in her Model-T car. When we arrived, she gave me the "grand tour". It was a small cozy house. She put four pieces of perfectly chopped wood into the fireplace. She told me to sit down and warm up. Then she brought me a big hand sewn blanket. "Thank you," I said through chattered teeth. I almost forgot it was December. I told the old lady about what had happened to me in the basement. She

laughed and said, "Maybe you need more sleep than I thought." But I couldn't go to sleep. I projected a plan to get out of here. Somehow I fell asleep though.

I woke up to the smell of delicious frying bacon and warm toasted bread. "Come eat child," she called. I ran to the kitchen. When I sat down, she poured me a glass of milk. She asked me what I felt like doing today, I replied, "Get a way back home." So that's exactly what we did all day. We walked in and out and in and out of phone booths. By the end of the day, I was really provoked. Finally, I gave up. I stayed outside as the old lady walked inside a store. While I was sitting there, I closed my eyes and started to cry.

"Chelsea, Chelsea, where are you?" I heard someone say. It sounded like my mom's voice. "MOMA!" I screamed.

"Chelsea, why are you in the basement, sleeping?" "Not to mention in a phone booth." She said. "So it was just a dream. I said to myself.

"What was?"

"Oh nothing."

Then she told me I needed to come and work on my 1920's project which is due tomorrow. "Whoa! I'm glad that was just a dream. At least now I know exactly what I'm going to write about." I laughed.

J. Paul Truluck Middle School

Florence County School District 3

**Sherif Green**

## **The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Era**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is a well-known African American in history. During my research, I found numerous results on his speeches, goals, walks, and boycotts. I wanted a real interview with him to find out the true facts, so I traveled back in time to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s first speech.

Watching and hearing his speeches, I heard and saw horrible things. I finally met Dr. King at a boycott in Atlanta, Georgia, but I didn't get a chance to get an interview because he was so busy doing other things. I did get a chance to study most of his speeches on uniting races, however. He spoke on behalf of both races and the chances of having equalization between them.

I joined his boycott and traveled across the country, trying to change the minds of everyone. Most events turned into riots or shootouts because unifying both races in America was such a new and different idea for people of that time period. When Dr. King was on his way home, white men bombed his house. Dr. King and his family were alright, but they were traumatized by the bombing. The family had to be relocated, but they were kept secure at all times.

After a meeting in New York, an African American female approached Dr. King and stabbed him. I thought I could steal an interview while he was in the hospital, but nobody was able to see him, so I scheduled an appointment to interview him after his speech in Washington. Before his speech was the demonstration walk. Thousands of people, including me, joined the walk from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Police officers blocked our way from across the bridge, which ended the walk.

During Dr. King's speech in Washington, thousands of people of different races joined together as unhappy people and left as brothers and sisters. On that day, the speech was shown on every television and played by every radio in the country. I was there to feel the pain in Dr. King's voice and see it in his body language. Each and every word spoken affected everyone in the country emotionally, and most people had a break through, realizing that it was time for change. When his speech was over, I knew things were going to be better, but the worst was yet to come.

In Tennessee, my interview with Dr. King was in an hour. When I was heading across the parking lot, I stopped walking. I fell to my knees when I heard the gunfire and saw Dr. King fall to his back. In the hospital, Dr. King died an hour later, at the age of 39. Charles Earle Ray was later found and charged as the killer of Dr. King. Thousands of people surrounded the church in support of Dr. King and his family.

In the end, I returned to the future without an interview. Instead, I returned with a new outlook on the Civil Rights Act of the 50's and 60's. Looking at black and white people then versus now changed the way I looked at the amount of changes that have taken place between the 50's and 2008. It was a trip that has changed my life, and I will never look at people the same way again.

**Johnson Middle School**  
Florence County School District Four  
**Ashley Stokes**

**When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?**

My life at eighty years old should be everything I hope. I do not hope for a lot of things, but I do hope my 80<sup>th</sup> year of living turns out exactly how I write about it. At the age of eighty, I will be engaging in relaxing activities, healthy and working and spending time with my amazing family I'm hoping to have.

When I'm eighty my life will be great! I will be doing lots of traveling and going to places I've always dreamed of. I will be engaging in activities such as going to the gym for exercise and to the pool to swim. Don't forget to mention shopping. That would have to be the most relaxing of them all.

Among all my other issues, I will still make time to continue my career as a nurse two to three days out of the week just to stay busy. Continuing to work at age eighty will help me to stay healthy and fit for life. Many times when you reach an elderly age and fail to stay active, people become weak and fragile, or unable to work or care for themselves.

Spending time with my family is important. I'm going to take a vacation with all my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. My family and I will relax and just spend lots of time with one another. We all love to go places as a family. I am going to spend all the time I can with them.

Life is so short. So plan ahead to stay on the right track. Engaging in relaxing activities, maintain a healthy, working life and spend lots of time with your amazing family and I promise you your 80<sup>th</sup> year will turn out like mine.

**Johnsonville Middle School**  
**Florence County**  
**Lukas Daniel**

**You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain what era you are visiting and why.**

Have you ever wanted to travel to a different era? If you have, you are not alone. Is one of the eras you would like to visit the Biblical era? That would be the era most interesting to me.

It would be so cool to live with Jesus Christ. I would experience all of his miracles and sermons. I could relive the building of Noah's Ark, the writing of the ten commandments, and even Jesus' resurrection. I could live with Jesus and hang out with his twelve disciples. Life would be magnificent.

In the Biblical era, I would also live longer than people do today. I would be able to sit on Jesus' lap as a kid and listen to his sermons as a man. It would be nice to live to be about 100 or 200 years. I would live for Jesus.

Living in the Biblical era would be great, but there would be some bad aspects too. A lot of people were punished greatly during that time for even talking about Jesus. Some were even stoned to death. Others were kept in prison. It would also be painful for me to watch Jesus die on the cross. Likewise, it would be hard to see the flood wipe out everyone except Noah and his family.

The Bible days would be great. To live with Jesus and spend time in heaven for eternity would be exciting. Even though there would be extreme consequences for your actions during this time, it would still be great to live during this era.



Carvers Bay Middle School  
Georgetown County  
Matthew Castle, Jr.

**When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?**

Have you ever thought of how your life would be when you are 80 years old? If you have, you may have come to the realization that life gets to be pretty bland. Every 80 year old I have ever seen has the exact same played out washed out life. Just think about it, they all eat the same boring food, they are the oldest living relics in their family and all they ever do is sit around and tell stories of how great the good old days were. I demand a change.

When I'm 80 years old, I'm going to eat anything my eye's can see. Most old people only eat applesauce and yucky foods high in fiber that's supposed to be good for you. Not me, never. I'm going to eat sumptuous Japanese and Chinese food that leaves a tingling sensation in your mouth for hours. I promise you no one will ever between my food and my mouth.

You know what else grinds my gears? When you turn 80, you're usually the oldest person in your family. Let's face it; these folks are as old as dinosaurs. Some of them even had dinosaurs for pets. Rest assured that won't be me. I'll make it my duty to keep my family healthy. Under my supervision and special eat what you want diet plan; they'll live to be 120. Because of me they'll be getting awards for being so old.

One last thing, when I'm 80 you won't hear me telling stories about the good old days. As a matter of fact I'll be every place but home. I'll do anything you can think of. Besides death will be waiting right around the corner why not have fun. My plan is to skydive, surf even be a stunt double for an action.

As you can see, I'm going to have the best time of my life as an old man. My 80 will be the new 20. But then again, after living on the wild side, I may not make it to 90.

**Northwest Middle School**  
Greenville County  
**Hope McJunkins**

**When the Pitcher in the Picture Began to Pour, I.....**

I looked out at the beautiful, green scenery as we drove into the old, long, dark driveway that seemed to take away all the happiness that was lingering within me. As we rounded the last steep curve, I saw it. It was a big, black house. It seemed to be anxious, as if it were ready to take on its next owner.

"Why do we have to live here, can't we just go back to Ohio, please?" I asked as the car stopped in front of the house that would soon be ours.

"Honey, you know how much it means to your father and me to live here. It was your grandma's, and we want to keep as many memories of her as we can. You will get used to it, I promise," she said with reassurance.

I bit my lip in defeat and sighed. How could I get used to this..... this house? To make things worse, it is out in the middle of nowhere, and it's surrounded by trees that seem to go on forever. I opened the car door and jumped out. I walked up the steps one at a time, dreading each one. I looked back and saw my mom and dad still at the car unloading boxes.

"Grace, why don't you go explore the house a little and pick out your room?" my dad asked as drops of sweat were streaming down the base of his cheek.

I walked into the house and I felt as if I was not welcomed. I looked around and saw gossamer strands of cobwebs and dust covering the walls and floors. I passed through the hallway and stopped at a wooden, oak framed door. I felt a pulling sensation, like the room itself was calling out to me. I slowly turned the door knob and pushed the door open. The room was empty, except for a picture. The picture looked like Grandma pouring a cup of tea.

Suddenly, the pitcher in the picture tilted and began to pour. I must be going crazy, I thought to myself. As I was staring at the picture, Grandma started moving. She looked back at me, pointed her finger, and smiled. I began to sway, and everything began to spin. Lower and lower, I could feel myself falling.

"Honey, we're here." I woke with a startle and looked at my surroundings. I saw the house I had feared to look at, and the trees that seemed to go on forever. It must've been a dream, I thought to myself. I got out of the car with a sigh of relief and helped my mom and dad heave boxes into the house.

"Honey, why don't you go and pick out your room?" my dad asked. I looked at him with a smile in return.

I walked down the hallway looking for the biggest room, but something caught my attention, like a force that was drawing me towards it. The familiar wooden, oak framed door that was in my nightmare was right before my eyes. I cautiously approached it, and slightly pushed it open. As slowly as I possibly could, frightened at what might lie within, I took a step into the room.

The tiny room was small, dusty, and dimly lit. As I looked around, I saw the picture I had feared. There before me was the same picture that had haunted my dream. And when the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I knew it was never going to end.....

**Westview Middle School  
Greenwood County  
Bradley Fuller**

**Standardized Tests in School are of Benefit to Students. Agree or Disagree? Defend your position.**

The issue of standardized testing has been debated as long as it has been around. Many of the people who make standardized tests mandatory feel that they are a benefit to students. I, however, beg to differ. To me, such tests limit learning, carry too much weight, and categorize students into groups. For these reasons, I firmly disagree with standardized testing.

To begin with, it seems as though tests like PACT (the statewide standardized test of South Carolina) and other standardized assessments almost place a limit on education. For example, teachers become so concerned with teaching the “standards” that they sometimes do not bother to go the extra mile. Therefore, students learn only what is required, and almost nothing else. This encourages students to be lazy and finish only enough to get by. In a way, you could say standardized testing eliminates the unquenchable thirst for higher knowledge.

Yet another reason why I am against standardized testing is that it carries too much weight. What I mean by this is that too big of a deal is made over these “important” tests. Sometimes as early as the first day of school, all I hear of is PACT and PACT standards. So many teachers and students alike worry over these standardized tests. I don’t think one test should be such an important part of the learning process. Students could benefit more if less time were spent preparing for these time-consuming tests. Less time on tests means more time for teaching and learning.

Last but not least, standardized tests attempt to categorize students. In a way, they are simply too “standard”. For instance, every student is advanced, proficient, basic, or below basic. Why should one test determine to what class a student belongs? People have different areas in which they are educated and uneducated. It seems as though these tests tell students what they should and should not learn. If everyone is unique, how can a “standardized” test even hope to account for certain discrepancies that may exist as a result of student individuality?

In conclusion, I oppose standardized testing. Though such tests may be an advantage to some students, I feel that overall they are more of a disadvantage to them. Standardized tests restrict learning, carry too much weight, and attempt to categorize students. These problems are a hindrance to student capabilities. Nonetheless, standardized assessments remain widespread. I, however, am against these mandatory yet non-beneficial tests.

**Edgewood Middle School  
Greenwood County  
Kristen Russell**

**“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...”**

I was walking through a house that was for sale in what I thought was a pleasant suburb; this was before it happened. I saw a picture hanging in the hallway. The picture was of a picnic in the park. On the table were a basket and a pitcher of lemonade. I thought it was an odd picture, but nothing could have prepared me for what was about to happen.

As I turned to explore further into the house, a movement caught my eye. When I turned to see what it was I saw that the pitcher was slightly elevated. I thought it was just my imagination, but when the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I started to freak out. I ran from the house and resolved never to tell anyone, they would just think that I was insane and that I belonged in a mental institution.

I went to work the next day, hoping against hope to forget the whole incident. When my boss tried to talk to me, I jumped, startled. I had been too absorbed in my thoughts, trying to calm myself down a bit; I had been oblivious to the client that I was supposed to be managing. What was I so freaked out about? Maybe I had dreamt the whole thing, but no dream was that vivid. I tried to focus on what the client was telling me, but my mind was on the picture. I may have been overreacting, but I didn't care, it was just too creepy. I told my boss I was sick and he sent me home, no questions asked. I guess I looked as bad as I felt.

A month had passed and I still remembered the incident vividly; an image to remain forever burned into my mind. I wished would just leave my mind already; it wouldn't stop torturing me. Then, one day, at work a coworker asked me for my opinion on some furniture he was thinking about buying for his new house and he showed me a picture he was thinking about buying. I let out a dreadful scream; it looked exactly the same as the picture that had tortured me for so long! He asked me what was wrong and if the picture was that ugly, and before I could stop myself the whole explanation poured out of my mouth. Again, I may have been overreacting, but I didn't care. He had a startled look on his face and then he told me that it was an electric picture and that it was programmed to do that! He laughed at my ignorance. I couldn't believe it, all the torture I had gone through had been for nothing! Oh well, live and learn I suppose.

I've never been able to forget that embarrassing misconception of mine. The people at work won't let me live it down. So don't always believe your eyes, and beware of electric pictures!

Black Water Middle School  
Horry County  
Faye Goodwin

**When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?**

I have the only window on my apartment floor. It doesn't open. There's nothing you can see out of it except dirty gray sky and the dirty gray skyline. Occasionally the blinking neon lights of the megamall illuminate the filthy panes. They used to spell out "Buy, buy, buy!"—maybe they still do; my old eyes haven't been working as well lately.

How did I get to be eighty years old? I can hardly remember my childhood, when the sky was still a clear blue, the clouds were white, and the trees grew all by themselves, instead of in the little greenhouses that keep our poor plants alive.

There is an infant ginko tree in a pot in the corner, wilted and sad. Maybe it is even sadder than I am at how the world has become. To tell the truth, we shouldn't be so sad. We should have seen it coming. It's not like they didn't warn us about pollution, global warming, and materialism. But we didn't listen. We plugged up our ears with the feel-good beliefs that others would take care of it.

We are alike, the ginko and I, except for our life spans. I have watched it sprout and grow, and will watch as it withers and dies, much like our abused plant. The ginko watches, also, as the world and I wither and die, much more slowly. I will die like the ginko—wilted and sick from the pollution—unnoticed and inevitably.

I remember with sorrow who I used to be—that young actress, carefree and spirited—then that older environmental activist, less carefree but just as spirited. Now my children are grown, and carry on that spirit. I hope that my children are living their lives fully; not looking back or hurrying constantly forward, but taking time to stop and live in the moment. I hope they

aren't taking their youth for granted. All too soon they will, like me, become the victim of that most awful pollutant—old age. It seeps slowly into your body like garbage into our Earth.

I hope that they don't despair. Even when you're eighty years old, there's still life left to live; still hope, love, and happiness. My ginko and I will cherish each moment, wake every morning to see the sunrise through the exhaust clouds, and realize that we love our lives.

**North Central Middle School  
Kershaw County  
Ealey Seegars**

**When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I .....**

The Museum of Art and Culture is one of the greatest places to be. Paintings, sculptures, designs, pop-culture pictures and performances are there just waiting to be observed. As I walked through the door, I saw a glowing blue light that attracted my eyes, as if it was from the heavens. When I got to the painting, it was a picture of a pitcher pouring out something, but what was it? As I got closer to the painting, a blue glowing hole opened and sucked me in, as if it was a portal to a new dimension or era.

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I fell into the ocean, where all my fears melted away. Just as the sea was cool, clear, and calm, I became the same. I fell to the ocean floor and knew I was cursed to stay in the water forever. As the bubbles floated away, I thought to myself, "If I am to stay here in the ocean, what is my purpose? Am I cursed?" As I kept thinking about it, it hit me! In order to find the meaning of my existence, I needed to discover why I was *here*.

As I wandered throughout the sea, I noticed a storm approaching a nearby town, not just any storm, a tsunami. I could hear the screams from above. I knew I must stop this accursed wave! I couldn't imagine the innocent people dying. So I jetted in front of a wave, trying to stop it with my own hands. I stood in the front of it yelling, "Stop! Don't come any closer!" but the tsunami got larger, faster, and stronger; it was angered and aiming for me.

I stood there crying, worried about the people in the city. Then all of a sudden, a ray of light flashed upon me, making me like a supernatural being. "Halt!" I said in a mighty roar. As I said the words, a blast of light in the form of a ray hit the tidal wave, dissolving it down to the last atom. The people were in shock! They sent boats out for me, but by that time they were too late for me.

Swimming, scared and worried, I grew tired. I stopped at a rock to take a rest. Those same rays of light that went through me before came again from above and a figure – no a woman, showed up. "You child - do you know your existence now?" said the bright figure.

"No. Why am I here?"

"You are the reincarnation of the sea god, Poseidon. You are the king of all the seas, and you must protect them and their inhabitants always!"

Before I could ask figure anything else, she vanished without a trace. It was clear: the power from Poseidon rested within me and only me. I now know my existence, thanks to that fateful encounter with the picture of a pitcher pouring out my life story.



**Indian Land Middle School  
Lancaster County  
Abby Juarez**

**You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain what era you visited and why.**

There are many cases in which mysteries, such as the disappearance of Amelia Earhart or the death of Edgar Allen Poe, are left unsolved for hundred or even thousands of years. No matter how many hypotheses we formulate, or the number of experiments we conduct, there is no way of knowing what actually took place at that certain point in time. The only way of escaping these doldrums is to somehow return to that time in history and observe with our own two eyes the events that took place. One may think that my proposition is laughable, but I have, in fact, accomplished such a task. I have returned to a time when the Roman rule was dominant. I conquered such a feat in order to discover the true cause of Pharaoh Cleopatra's death.

There are several theories as to how Cleopatra died, the most common and widely emphasized being that she died by the bite of an asp and her own desire. Although this theory is historically accurate, it was my discovery that this was not the true nature of Cleopatra's death. She, being the ruler of a very powerful kingdom, had too much to live for to throw it all away.

The method by which I returned to the past is irrelevant to my tale, but the time at which I arrived, not a second past midnight, is of greatest importance. My mission was to steal into Cleopatra's quarters by the time that she was thought to have taken her last breath. Arriving in the dark of night helped me to achieve my goal and forced the disadvantage of sight upon my oppressors. The broad-shouldered guards held their positions outside the building that imprisoned Cleopatra and seemed an impossible obstacle to overcome. Thankfully, I was able to tunnel myself through an opening that was apparently built for the disposal of sewage but was not being used for its purpose, so it was vacant except for me.

The path to Cleopatra's room was tough indeed, as I had to pass many guards and servants with the threat of detection constantly pursuing me. When I finally arrived, the scene was not the same picture painted by so many historians and Egyptologists. She lay there, elegant even in death, with a gaping crimson hole in the vicinity of her no longer beating heart. Her maidens' fates were of the same accord, though they did not possess the beauty of Cleopatra. In place of a poisonous snake, a blood stained dagger lay at the foot of the bed. The two pricks that were thought to have been on her arm were not present. Not knowing what to do, I left her to rest in peace and decided to make my way back to the exterior of the prison.

On my way, I overheard an odd conversation between the ruthless ruler and lover of Cleopatra, Octavian, and a lowly servant. I heard Octavian say that while lurking outside the prison he saw a girl enter the castle through a tunnel carved in the wall. "I needed a way into the prison so I followed the girl," said Octavian. "I knew that once I was inside the building, I could find my way to Cleopatra's quarters and do the deed that must be done." He said that had it not been for the cunning of the mysterious girl he would have

never reached the room and would have never had the chance to rid the world of the hated Cleopatra.

Knowing fully what his words meant, I continued to make my way and once outside, I stopped to realize the impact that I had made. I had forever changed the course of history by trying to find out what it was to begin with. Because of my attempts, the mystery of Cleopatra's death was now even murkier than before. It might be that some mysteries are meant to unravel, while others are never meant to be solved.

**Laurens Middle School  
Laurens  
Braden Burns**

**When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?**

Technology is rapidly changing our lives and the way we live. Fifty years ago people lived life much differently just as we will live life much differently in the future. In sixty-seven years I will be eighty years old and I expect I will be experiencing a much different way of life. Robots will most likely play a major role in homes and work. Transportation will also advance where little or no manpower is needed and vehicles have unique personalities. In addition, entertainment will be more realistic than one can imagine.

To begin with, when I am eighty, my home will be cleaned and maintained by robots that look real and can perform everyday task. Realistic robots will be common in all homes giving people more time to relax and enjoy themselves. No more cutting grass because computerized mowers with sensors will automatically maintain the yard year round. Robots will also be used for jobs that are dangerous such as construction, firefighting and crime. This will decrease injuries and the loss of lives. Also, computer technology will allow almost every job to be done from homes and at the same time the person will feel like they are in a work environment.

Next, transportation will be much more high tech than today. Cars will be able drive themselves around with out any human control. Cars will also be able to pick you up at any location by simply setting a time, and place. They will all have navigation systems so that no one can get lost anymore. With the cars new advanced sensor technology, running stop signs and red lights will no longer exist which will

greatly decrease wrecks and injuries. All trains will run on elevated tracks, which will also help reduce car accidents.

Finally, entertainment will be much different in the future. Every television and movie will be 3-D and seem real. All televisions will have realistic smell and sounds. This will make you feel like you are really in the movie. Music will be on a disc the size of a quarter and will be voice activated. Not only will this disk play sound but you will also be able to see a 3-D image of the band you are listening to.

The rapid growth in technology is amazing and exciting. By the time I reach the age of thirty, life, as we know it today will no longer exist. Instead we will experience new technology in our homes, transportation and entertainment that is only imagined today. The future offers more opportunities allowing everyday life to be more flexible so we can spend more time doing the things we enjoy. The road to the future is an incredible journey.

**Bell Street Middle School**

Laurens County

**Jennifer Barksdale**

**When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?**

“And one. TWO! And three. That’s it, work it girls! And four. Five!” Johnny exclaimed with a little TOO much enthusiasm. So here I am on Saturday morning doing stupid water aerobics class. That’s what my quack doctor suggested. “It will help you stay calm, relieve stress, and lower your blood pressure.” Yeah Right!

I’m not your ordinary 80 year-old woman. I don’t enjoy sitting in a rocking chair, knitting, all day, humming old hymns to myself. That’s not me. I like to live on the edge!

Back to the water aerobics thing, I love to swim, don’t get me wrong, but being in the water with a whole bunch of fellow wrinkly prunes isn’t my thing. I’m the type of woman that goes for the younger men. Not those boys that just came out of school, but the mid-age men, like 50-60 years old. At the moment, I am holding my own record of seven boy friends. All seven of them are really good friends with each other, and have some kind of “mystery” girlfriend. I get a really big kick out of that!

I am currently entered in the Winter X Games of 2087, held in Salt Lake City, Utah. My events include free-style snowboarding and the one-mile slope ski race. I’ve been training for this for the last four years and it’s only three weeks away. I’m already beginning to feel the pre-race rush and my heartbeat is quickening with every passing day.

I hear a door slam shut, “BANG!” My whole body jerks from the sudden waking sound. I’m sitting in my bed surrounded by light pink flowery walls. The clock on my nightstand reads 1:20 am. Wow, that was one strange dream. I wonder if I’m really going to be like that when I’m 80 years old.

**Mount Pleasant Middle School**  
Lee County  
**Georgeanna Toney**

**When I visited The 70s**

Have you ever wondered what it is like to travel through time? Well I do all the time. One Christmas I finally got to experience it first-hand instead of wondering what it is like. I got a bike and went outside to ride it and that's when it happened.

I woke up on Christmas morning excited to see what presents awaited me. I was so anxious that I could hardly eat my breakfast. I managed to finish before everyone else. I sat impatiently at the table while everyone else finished eating. When everyone was finally finished my mom said we could go into the living room to open our presents. As soon as I heard those words I ran into the living room so fast that I almost knocked the Christmas tree down. My mom said I could open my presents first but I wasn't concerned about the presents because I wanted to ride my brand new bike. My daddy helped me take it outside.

When I started riding my bike I felt a big rush of air then the next thing that I know people with really big Afros and crazy outfits surrounded me. I thought for a second and realized that I must have traveled back in time to the seventies. I was kind of excited and began to explore the place I was in. When I finally was tired of just wondering around I stopped this girl I saw that looked about my age. I asked her where I was and what was the date. She told me I was in Lee County and that it was 1/24/1971. Then she offered to show me around. When I realized that I could trust her I told her the story of how I got there. At first she didn't believe me but then she finally realized I was telling the truth.

She offered to show me around. I saw a lot of cool looking places. I was surprised at how different everything was in the seventies then from 2007. After she finished showing me around she offered for me to come over for dinner. I quickly said yes because I was starving. The food was still the same. I was glad of that. When we finished dinner she asked me if I wanted to come to one of her friends party to meet some of her other friends. I hesitated for a second and reluctantly said yes. When we got to the party I was so glad that I had said yes it was so much fun. They had a disco ball and every thing else that all the books said people usually had at parties in the seventies. I had the time of my life.

After we left the party she told me that she could show me how to get back home. She said that this thing happened every year around Christmas. I was so happy that I was going back home. She told me all I had to do was get back on my bike and ride it in the opposite direction that I had before. IT WORKED. When I got home I had an exciting story to tell everyone, but I wasn't going to ride that bike for a very long time.

**Pleasant Hill Middle School  
Lexington County  
Allison Callari**

**When You Are 80 Years Old What Will Your Life Be Like?**

When I look back on my life now, I realize how fortunate I am to have had all that I did and all that I do have. My name is Allison Callari. I chose to keep my maiden name even after I married. The year is 2074 and I am eighty years old. I have been living for so long that sometimes memories and details slip away from me, like time and years do, but I remember my childhood and my teenage years very clearly for some odd reason. Perhaps it is because the events that happened to me during those years changed and molded me into what I am today.

I was born in Rochester New York on March 22, 1994. I had an older sister and a younger brother. They were my inspiration and my best friends when I was younger and they still are a big part of my life. My mother was a stay at home mom, while my father was a business man who sold adds for the phone book company. I was four or five years old when my family and I moved to North Carolina. We lived there for one and a half years before moving again to Chattanooga, Tennessee. I made some of my most memorable friends in Chattanooga. Our neighborhood was full of families that all hung out. Our families got very attached to other families within a short amount of time which turned out to be a bad thing in the end.

My parents told me we would have to move again someday but I never really believed them, until I saw the for sale sign in our yard that cold October night. When we left Tennessee it felt like a Band-Aid being ripped off my knee, tearing the top layer of a cut fresh off and exposing the ugly underside. I was mad and sad for a while but time healed the awful cut that the Band-Aid had concealed. We moved to Rochester, New York. I loved it there and didn't ever want to leave, but of course we had to.



When I was twelve, so after two and a half years of living in Rochester we moved again, this time to Lexington, South Carolina. I was even more attached to New York than I was to Tennessee, and when that Band-Aid was ripped off again it took much longer to heal, longer to forget the pain and longer to feel at home. See, moving may not seem to have an affect on some people but it did on me. It made me more careful, more reserved. It took me longer to make friends because I was scared of getting too close and having to move again. We ended up staying in Lexington, South Carolina until I graduated from high school. My parents and my younger brother moved to Wisconsin. My sister and I were at college though so we weren't affected by the move.

I went to Clemson University, where I majored in biology. When I got out of college I spent a year traveling around the world and found out who I was as a person. I discovered things about myself in that year; like that I liked to cook, but only after I had gone to Emeril's show in Louisiana. Or that I wasn't afraid of sharks because I had gone scuba diving in the Bahamas with them. I returned to South Carolina in 2017. I fell in love and married in that same year and had my first child in 2020. It was a girl and we names her Isabella. I had three more children after that: Eli, Edward and Katrina.

Although it was tiring and hard, I loved being a mother, still do. The rewards of raising a child and watching them grow up right before your eyes is a true miracle. Children are a gift and should be cherished forever. I taught my children all that I learned from my childhood and my adulthood, like to love and to forgive and to be yourself and to not be afraid of life but to befriend it.

My children grew up like I did and went off to college far too soon. Time sure can fly. They eventually got married and became parents themselves. I became a grandmother before I knew it. My grandchildren were gifts as well. I spoiled them with gifts and kisses but that's what a grandmother is supposed to do. It seems like the older you get the faster time seems to go and the

slower you seem to move.

My grandchildren are all grown up now and they have children of their own, so that makes me a great-grandmother. I'm starting to lose some of my old memories from when I was younger but the outlines of the memories still exist. From my time I have learned to make as many friends as possible and to live every day to the fullest even if you live to be as old as me. Be nice to people and learn to forgive and forget, otherwise everything you know will mean nothing. And finally, learn to love at an early age so that you can keep on loving at a very old age. Love is the most powerful thing so don't waste it, but cherish it.

R. H. Fulmer Middle School

Lexington County

Alexander Sharpe

### You Traveled To a Different Era to Relive History

At school we were studying the Battle of Trenton in the Revolutionary War, but the only thing on my mind was that there was going to be a blue moon tonight.

Unfortunately, we had a load of worksheets about the battle.

I was finishing my homework. Suddenly my alarm went off and I ran to my telescope. There was a full blue moon! It was amazing! I pulled out my camera and started filming. Suddenly a comet flew in front of the moon. The lights went out in our house and the temperature began to rapidly decline. I went over to my bed and bumped into a wall.

*"Where's my bed?"* I felt around for the light switch and got a splinter in my finger. *"Ow!"* I yelled. *"But wait, my wall's not wooden."* Confused I walked outside and stepped into a whole different world.

There was snow everywhere. I jumped back, falling to the floor. My bare feet felt numb. Shivering, I looked outside. There stood old-fashioned looking soldiers.

"This is when the Americans cross the Delaware," I whispered.

"Aaaaagggghhhh!" I screamed, grabbed my camera and telescope and ran into a corner. In my face was a bayonet. Several men had guns aimed at me. Then a familiar looking man walked in and said, "Who are you?" It was George Washington! I was scared, so I

sat there. He repeated himself, "Who are you?" When I didn't answer, he said, "Seize him." I bit the man holding me and smacked another over the head with my telescope, breaking it. Another tried to grab me, but I slid under his legs. The two behind him toppled over like dominoes. I was really stirring up some commotion. More soldiers ran over to investigate. I grabbed a hat, some boots and a blue tattered jacket from under an empty bunk to disguise myself, and slipped past the guards. I heard General Washington call the troops to the river. We were going to attack the Hessians! Handed an American flag, I followed the general into his boat. We began to make our way to Trenton.

Early in the morning, we attacked the Hessians, killing around twenty and capturing the rest. I watched the Patriots ransack houses while the Hessians surrendered. Later that night I wondered if I was ever going to get back to reality. Finally I drifted off to sleep. Holding my camera and broken telescope, I awoke. I was under my bedroom window. *Was this all a dream? It couldn't be real. Never.*

Later that day I found a splinter in my finger.

**Batesburg-Leesville Middle School  
Lexington County  
Sara Walden Hanna**

**“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...”**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I just stared. For the first time in my life, I think my heart stopped beating for a second. I shut the book, looked around the library, took a deep breath, and reopened the book. Suddenly, the parrot on the page I turned to came to life and squawked loudly. I slammed the book shut. Did the librarian hear me? Does she even know this book exists? Numerous questions ran deep throughout my mind. I put the book back on the shelf and started my way home, awe-struck and a little dizzy from what I'd just experienced.

Everyday after school, I rushed to the back of the library and found the magical book. On the second day, I discovered that I could also go into the pictures in the book and witness events. Over those few days, I learned about the Revolutionary War, cures for the flu, and how to make award winning lemonade. Every time I left the library, I felt a little bit smarter.

One day at the library, I came across a picture I'd never seen before. The date below the picture said 2053. Immediately, I was standing in a room filled with people around a big rectangular table arguing and yelling. Outside I heard bombs being dropped. From what I could understand, the whole world was at war.

I couldn't stand the noise anymore. “Hey!” I heard myself shout. The room actually grew silent. “I thought I should tell you that the world can't go on like this. First of all, you need to get a round table to sit around so everyone can be equal.

Secondly, you need to talk like civilized people and come to a compromise. In addition, the war must stop. Why don't you elect a world leader and unite the nations?"

Once I ended my speech, everything changed before my eyes. People were sitting around a circular table, talking softly, and nodding to each other in agreement. I couldn't believe it! Did I actually change the future? All of a sudden, I was back in the library. The librarian approached me. "Is everything all right, dear?" "It is now," I replied with a smile.

**Sandhills Middle School**  
**Lexington County**  
**Emily Moler**

**“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I....”**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour I reached out to investigate, unknowingly making a decision that would change everything. First I just felt the canvas but my fingers started to dissolve into the picture. I surveyed my surrounding; it looked like I was in a cottage with a fire burning. On a table sat the pitcher.

“Wait! The picture!” I thought, whirling around, looking for a sign of the world I left behind. On one of the walls was a rectangle showing the room I had come from. I could see curious eyes peering in. I ran over and jumped, however, it seemed as if they couldn’t see me.

“Sakura, it’s pointless. You are invisible to them.” A voice boomed. I looked around, attempting to find the source but failing.

“Who are you? Where are you?” I asked, trying to sound demanding but failing.

“I am the great Naruto.” The voice answered, “As to where I am that’s unimportant, what matters is why you’re here.”

“Why am I here?” I asked, looking for an escape but the walls were bare, albeit the picture. I was trapped.

“You have been chosen to travel through pictures while collecting three orbs that will save the world in one lunar cycle.” The voice vanished leaving me unsure of what to do next.

“My first step is to get out of here.” I announced as an idea came to me. Quickly I backed up and charged toward the opposite wall expecting pain but was greeted by a tingling sensation. I was going through the wall! I skidded to a stop as I entered the next picture. In here there was a seated woman, Mona Lisa. I looked around, and began to leave but a glistening object caught my eye. I walked over and picked it up, peering inside.

‘This must be the orb.’ I thought.

“Congratulations, you’ve found the first orb. The others will be harder so rest, for tomorrow your journey begins.” The voice advised.

I sat down closing my eyes. After all, now would probably be the best time because who knows what tomorrow may bring.

**Dutch Fork Middle School**  
Lexington/Richland County  
**Valerie Krueger**

**“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...”**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I was not ready for it. The paint-textured water poured all down my shirt. “How can this be possible?” I said to myself. “How could something frozen in one position suddenly move so freely?”

I suddenly began to wonder, is this painting some open window into an artist created world? Are all paintings windows but simply closed? This thought came to my mind from out of nowhere, as if someone had spoken it to me. It was very peculiar.

Just as the thought entered my head, I heard a loud crash and a thunderous exclamation of various noises. “What was that?” I said aloud to myself, thinking that the whole building was coming down around me. But instead of debris falling around me, there came some manner of a stampede. Oh, and what a strange stampede it was! There were people with unreal and distorted features, horses with a cloud of dust instead of legs, elephants the size of rats, and strange beasts only known in myth! I jumped out of the way and almost got trampled by a huge mouse! They all burst out of the doors of the museum.

When they did, all was lost. Their existence inside the museum and inside the paintings was essential, lest the fabric of reality would become torn, as it was now. And reality really was torn, just as a fabric would be, leaving a gaping hole with light, darkness, and all manner of color swirling in a huge vortex, which was sucking everything into its depths. As I was sucked in I thought, how can one insignificant painting cause a catastrophe such as this? Then, everything went dark.



When I awoke, I was in my dorm at college, nothing unusual was going on. I then saw the time. "Eleven-forty!" I screamed. "I'm going to be late for class." I pulled on my shirt and ran out of my dorm. When I got to my class the professor said, "You're very late and obviously you didn't even attempt to dress properly!" What was he talking about? Then with an expression showing both astonishment and horror, I looked down and saw the large, blue paint stain that ran down my shirt.

Johnakin Middle School  
Marion 1 School District  
Da'Shawn Mosley

## Standardized Tests WE CAN DO WITHOUT THEM!

By Da'Shawn Mosley  
Johnakin Middle School

Standardized tests are not of any benefit to students, and I don't care how you look at it. No test can tell you how smart you are or how more intelligent you are than the person sitting right beside you. These tests are supposed to determine what a student has learned; at least, that's what has been told to us. But the simplest things can lower an intelligent eighth grader's test scores to the average first grader. What if he has a cold or just a grumpy attitude? Then that student's road to their future career is damaged forever.

No multiple-choice test can possibly determine how intelligent I am and the same applies for everyone else in America. There are other methods to determine how a student is doing in a class. All a standardized test is is a pamphlet and that's how students see it. On one website, a girl made a comment that she just bubbles in answers when she gets a standardized test because it's not going to affect her grade. Here is another thing I don't understand: to determine why a student has done poorly on a standardized test, evaluators go back to the test to examine it. That's a mistake! Sheer madness! The government is trying desperately, with this *No Child Left Behind* Act, to take control of education in America and form it the way they want it. The way they see it, test scores equal ability. They seem to want America to gain higher scores in education but how can that happen when they keep piling tests on us that we can't possibly comprehend. Some questions they expect students to be able to answer when only one specific type of person would have the advantage of knowing the answer and the rest of the students more likely getting it wrong.

The government claims to be trying to help education but they're not. Instead, they're hurting it! Twisting it and changing it

for the worst! Will it come to be that a standardized test determines whether or not you're smart enough to vote or to do any other simple task that Americans do? I hope not but with the way things are happening now, it might come to that *sooner* than we even expect it to. This subject ties straight into the message America needs to realize: the government is trying to take total control of what we do and how we do it and I won't stand for it any longer! It's time they realize that they're not helping us, they're hurting us.

Our freedoms, our God given rights, are swaying in the balance of the uncharacterized political choices and nature of our testing procedures, an unsafe place for "balance" to be. When will our government acknowledge that the standardized tests have no use, no meaning? Will they ever realize it at all? And if they do, will it be too late?

**Palmetto Middle School**  
**Marion County-District 2**  
**Jared Jackson**

**When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?**

Hello! It is the year 2074. My name is Jared Jackson, and I am a retired doctor. I'm 80 years old today! I'm growing old, with my white hair, glasses, and all my wrinkles on my skin. Let me share with you what it is like living in 2074 as an 80 year old.

First off, I'd like to welcome you to the year 2074. There have been many changes made on Earth and in our community in my generation. "Hold on! Let me go fix my coffee. I just got back from my morning jog."

"Yes, I do try to keep in shape at 80 years old." Gulp-gulp-gulp.

"Ah!! The sweet smell of coffee in the morning."

Oh, like I was saying, there have been many changes made in my generation. We are all high-tech now. Tomorrow I plan on buying my third smart-house. A smart-house is the most high-tech house you can buy. It can do basically anything you want it to do.

In the year 2074, we also have our own, very high-tech, specialized labor force. This unique labor force is made up of 600 trained robots. Since the invention of the MX781 robots in 2057, humans no longer have to work. We get to drive around all day, everyday, in our solar-powered vehicles. It's the older model of the two new high-tech vehicles, the flying car and solar-powered car. I drive the solar-powered car. My family and I don't feel comfortable in a flying car.

My family and I live in Spectmotropolis, the new hovering city. It hovers 10,000 feet above Earth's surface. Because global warming melted all of the icebergs and the

oceans rose, humans had to move to higher ground. We definitely didn't want to live underwater. Atomic and nuclear bombs also destroyed Earth's land and surface, some 60 years ago. There is no more pollution or fog going through the air because of our new, high-tech city.

I enjoy it here in the year 2074. Our "Earth" is definitely not the same as it used to be 80 years ago. I wouldn't change a thing!!

Creek Bridge High School  
Marion County  
Joshua Jordan

### My Visit to the Middle Ages

*If I had a time machine and could select a place to revisit, I would go to the Middle Ages. I would like to go there because I would like to learn about the ways they lived and all about their beliefs. I would love to see Sir Lancelot, learn how to duel, and learn to become a knight. In addition to these experiences, I would love to learn magic so I could perform magical tricks. Also, I would do extensive investigations and try to determine if dragons actually existed. These are some of the activities I would engage in if I could visit the Middle Ages.*

*Learning about Sir Lancelot is something that appeals to my interest. He would probably teach me the ways and techniques of becoming a knight. This would include how to take care and defend one's country as well as strategies to successfully defeat the enemies. Of course, seeing different kinds of kings, their culture, their dress, etc. would be beneficial to my learning experience. I would really love to meet and become an acquaintance of Sir Lancelot.*

I also would like to meet some of the knights, especially the Knights of the Round Table. It would be awesome to become an honorary knight and sit with them when they assemble. Sometimes knights enter into a duel, a fight between different knights. This would be a breathtaking moment, an experience to last forever. I might even choose to be in one of those duels.

A logical reason for going to meet a real wizard is because I would like to learn magic. It could be really cool to go around and perform magic and create spells on certain people. I could make new potions and try them out on people. It would be really cool to do things like that.

The scary part of going back in time to the Middle Ages is that there might be dragons. I do not know if they exist, but it would be kind of cool to see, I guess. As long as I don't get burned or eaten!! I really would like the chance to see one. Even if I did get chased by a dragon, I would have a knight beside me to be my savior. He would be courageous and save me. He would help me whenever I needed him.

If my time machine could go back to the Middle Ages, I would like to visit a wizard, investigate dragons, and visit the Knights of the Round Table and Sir Lancelot. If that could happen, it's a chance I would take. I know bad things could happen, but it's worth a shot. So if I had the chance, I would take it no matter what. I hope that this wish will come true some day.



Bridget Turner  
McColl Middle School  
District Winner for Marlboro County  
Grade 8

### When the Pitcher in the Picture Began to Pour

I was sitting in my new bedroom, which looked old. Its aroma was like an old, dusty, moist smell that was soured. Hanging on the wall was a picture of a pitcher that looked aged. While gazing at this picture, I noticed the pitcher began to pour—as if it were alive! I panicked, and my heart was racing!

What tumbled out of the mouth of the pitcher was a golden necklace. I stood up anxiously, staring at the necklace lying tamely on the shelf under the pitcher. I was startled by this scene. Ambitiously, I walked toward the dusty shelf. I rested in front of this mysterious necklace. It didn't look like it was counterfeit, though. The necklace lay there as if it was staring right back at me! I picked up the necklace nervously and examined it closely.

The necklace had a charm on it. In the center of the golden charm was a universal “glob.” There was an outlining on this glob that seemed to have some bizarre codes written on it. The necklace looked like some kind of Egyptian material. Nervously, I put the golden necklace around my neck. I went up to the mirror and analyzed how I looked. I turned the glob in the center of the charm numerous times. The glob glowed with a vivid color!

My room started spinning around me like I was being transferred through time. I tried to move, but I was stuck as if I was a statue! I could feel the agony rush through my body. I saw things begin to transform around me. I must have blanked out because everything went black like in the center of a storm.

When I awoke, I was in some strange room that had walls made of gold. Along the steel walls were pictures of people who had bows and arrows in their hands. I also noticed that the walls had the same coding that the necklace had. My mind started “flipping” out. I thought maybe if I would take off the necklace, I would be back in my room. I lifted my trembling, nervous hands toward the necklace to unclasp it, but it broke!

The necklace was so fragile and aged that it just fell apart and broke! “Now I will be stuck here!” I wailed.

“Emma,” I could hear my mom calling me.

“Ma,” I yelled back. I saw my mom walk in, but she couldn’t see me. It was like we were in two different worlds, and I could see her through glass, but she couldn’t see me.

My grandma always warned me that I would one day regret how I treated my mom. I was always hateful toward her. “Emma,” she called again.

“Ma,” I kept wailing.

“Emma, wake up and get ready for school,” she said. I felt something shaking me, and I closed my eyes and opened them back up anxiously.

There she was. “I thought I would never see you again!” I cried out.

“Get up, honey. I fixed you some breakfast,” she said, smiling.

She left out of the room, and I lay there nervously on my bed with my pulse still racing. I looked up at the wall curiously. There hung the picture of the pitcher. And...it started to pour!

Mid-Carolina Middle School  
Newberry County  
**Jordan Suber**

**Standardized tests in school are of benefit to students. Agree or disagree?  
Defend your position.**

Many modern-day educators seem to think that standardized tests are beneficial to students in the public school system. This is a view that I strongly oppose. Public education is supposed to prepare its students for careers in the real world, but it seems that standardized tests do not simulate the professional world at all.

First of all, standardized tests greatly limit the curriculum. Teachers spend all of their time trying to squeeze in material that is on standardized tests. Yes, standardized tests are used by colleges to observe the intellectual development of potential students, but there should be a better way. A student's whole year should be observed. The best student in a class may, for some reason, do terrible on a standardized test. What then? That person's whole future may be in jeopardy, even after a year of hard work. Is it right to put students through this kind of stress and to judge them on a small glimpse of their academic abilities? If one looks at it from a student's perspective, I think they will agree that it is not just.

Standardized tests have only recently begun to plague our schools. Students from the past have had great futures without these tests. Look at the "baby boomer" generation, who didn't have so many standardized tests, and you will find many successful entrepreneurs. None of them made it alone. In the "real world," we have many resources at our disposal. Through sophisticated networks, such as the Internet, information is at our fingertips. I am mentioning this because it bears a stark contrast to the isolation that students face in standardized tests. What good it is to memorize things for a short while, only to forget them later? Shouldn't we be stressing the importance of working together and using resources instead?

Studies have proven that other countries are ahead of the United States in education. These nations do not rely on standardized tests. In the best interest of our future, we should make changes now. People who have not done very well in school have still found their place in the corporate world. They have learned to abandon conventional ideas, and they know how to use their resources. This in itself reveals the irrelevance of what we are tested on today. If education was shifted instead to what students wanted to learn, we may get farther. We would be much more prepared for future occupations. The drop-out rate would also drastically decrease.

A school system without standardized tests would be one that invests in our nation's future. Students would learn to take advantage of their resources and would be better prepared for an occupation. We would learn to deal with the issues our world faces and be confident about it.

Seneca Middle School

Oconee County

Abram Edgar

**When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I stared in disbelief. This brushed silver picture frame hung from the wall with ease... just like any frame. The only thing connecting it to the maroon wall is a thin piece of metal twine hung over a rusty nail protruding out of the wall. There were no wires or electricity coursing through it, but yet the colors on the silk flowed and moved as if a dream was being played in front of my eyes.

Clasping the handle on the dented pitcher in the dream playing before me was a black woman dressed in slave drag. I looked hard at her and despite her sad eyes and misery stricken features... I couldn't help but notice how beautiful she was. She looked the age of twenty-five and wore her hair tied up in a bun. Her skin was flawless beside the stress line buried deep into her forehead, and her brown eyes only led me further into believing this was a dream.

My daze of her beauty was interrupted when suddenly the dream began to move. The break of the movement frightened me, but when I regained myself I looked at the mystery before me and saw that the woman was trying to say something. Now, this may have been the craziest and most miraculous experience in my life, but apparently the dream was limited to movement. It was like being deaf and only understanding by the movement of her flawless lips.

I stared at her... confused to say the least. Soon I began to read her dark lip's movement. Her face was calm, but the message was muddled.

"Tell my story," she was saying.

"Tell my story?" I repeated with a strong baffled tone to my voice.

"Tell my story," she repeated over and over and over.

I pondered the words and watched the rare beauty start to deteriorate into the ocean of color behind her. I watched the colors flow until a picture of a field began to take the place of the gorgeous woman in the dream. As the details in the picture started to become clear to me, I noticed the three black women in the field with bushels of wheat surrounding them from the waist down. One stood out above the rest. It was the beautiful woman in the previous picture before it. The other two women laboring in the field contrasted each other amazingly. There was a dark, older woman and to her side was a young black girl struggling to keep the older woman on her feet or even alive.

Slowly the jagged movements of the dream began to proceed to new conflicts. From the edge of the silk began the image of a white man in a beautiful suit trimmed in blue and tailored to fit. His suit may have been beautiful, but the anger and rage in his eyes stole my sight. I watched as the jagged image of the man pace his way to the over worked woman who was now on the ground. The frantic movement of the young girl brought my attention to her. She had her arms under the woman lifting her from the ground. All of a sudden the woman fell with a resounding thud. By this time the well dressed man and his anger had made his way over to the pitiful group of fallen workers. I watched in horror as the man raised his gloved hand high in the air and brought it down on the old woman with such force that I swear that I could hear the force of fist on skull

in my ears. I could picture the gruesome scene in my mind. I could picture the screams of pain and horror. I could picture the sounds that I was glad could not be heard.

The only thing that broke the images continuing in my mind was when the rare beauty broke her graceful pose and released an action of running through the wheat field and slamming into the man. It must have been quick in reality, but the scene played slowly in my head. The white man threw the woman off of him into the wheat. He through himself on her and in one quick motion pulled out a gun. The slow motion image of sparks flying out of the gun squirmed threw my head. I gasped in my quiet room. The image stood still like a picture should. I thought the dream was over, but slowly the image zoomed in with direct motion to the rare beauty. This didn't stop until it was on her peaceful... lifeless face. In a moment her eyes opened and spoke the familiar words... tell my story.

**Orangeburg County Consolidated School District Three**  
**Elloree Elementary/Middle School**  
**Destiny Bayne**

## **A Slip in Time**

Well, I had just gotten home from school, and I was dog tired! So, like any decent person, with maybe an ounce of common sense, I hopped on the couch and to take a nap. There was just one tiny problem...I couldn't get to sleep! I tossed and I turned for what seemed like hours until a light bulb went on inside of my head. The History channel! If anything will put me to sleep, it's the history channel! "Transcendentalism was a peaceful time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century....generally associated with Emmerson...." Were the last words I heard before I drifted off to sleep.

I awoke, not on the couch in my living room, but in a cozy armchair in what seemed to be a log cabin. My first thought was "This couch is more comfortable than I remember" and my second was "Ahhhh I'm kidnapped!" I saw a door leading outside of the cabin, so I headed over to it. For some reason I couldn't quite keep myself steady. My feet seemed to be bigger than my body! On my way to the door, I got a glimpse of myself in the mirror. Could you ever guess what I saw?

As I stepped up to the mirror, I saw not a 13 year old, dirty blonde girl with grey eyes, but a man. A man with deep brown eyes and chocolate hair. A man with a rough beard and a pointed nose. Suddenly, I wished I had paid more attention in all of my history classes, for I was sure I knew who he was, and where I was, but it couldn't be possible! Had I actually slipped through time? "Emmerson!" I said aloud, jumping slightly at the sound of my voice. Wow! I thought "This doesn't happen everyday, so I'll try to stay calm about this." I saw a mahogany desk in the far corner as I paced around the cabin, and there I saw what obviously was a not-quite-finished novel. I flipped the book to the front, and there, written with a quill, was the title "**Walden**". I looked around

expectantly, for everyone knows that Thoreau wrote this novel, and that he and Emerson were good friends. I would love to talk to such a great man, a man whom I admire, Henry David Thoreau.

I sat down in the chair behind the mahogany desk, like a kindergartener would his teacher's, and thought about what to do next. If I'm not going senile at an early age, I thought to myself, then I am obviously in the transcendentalism era. I had read about it before, and I whole-heartedly agreed with their beliefs.

I was thinking about how it would be nice to live in a cabin like the one I was in, when I heard a voice behind me. "Ahhh Ralph! How good of you to drop by and see me!" It was HIM. It was Henry D. Thoreau! "Uhhh..." I said. I must've looked as shocked as I felt, because he looked at me, laughed, and asked if I would like some tea. I accepted, and as he got the drink ready, the great Thoreau and I had a little conversation.

"I could stay like this all of my life" I said. He agreed. "Ahh transcendentalism, my friend, 'Tis a wonderful period." "Yes, I wish that future generations may live as we do," I replied, "being at one with nature, knowing that spontaneity is better than sticking to logic and planning, and being able to express ourselves through our works." Thoreau raised his tea to me and I blushed harder than I ever had in my life.

Thoreau suggested we to take a short walk through the woods, and since it was autumn and chilly-my favorite weather- I agreed. It was odd to walk next to someone so great, yet everything seemed perfectly normal. As we walked, we continued our talk about transcendentalism, starting with how most transcendentalists try to feel and get to know nature. "Like we are now, I said, something as simple as walking around Walden pond. Hearing the leaves crunch under our feet, watching them fall off of the trees, listening to the birds and breathing that crisp clean air." Thoreau nodded. "Some people experience these things, but they don't really look, really smell, or really touch" he said,



bending down to pick up a stone and throw in into the pond. "A man's interest in a single bluebird is worth more than a complete but dry list of the fauna and flora of a town."

How do you feel about reason and logic?" I asked him , eager to hear this information from the source. "I believe, he started, that living your life by logic, and by planning, you are not living up to the full expectations of our wonderful creator." Wow I thought. He really knows what hes talking about. "How about you Emmerson? What do you think?" "Being spontaneous can sometimes be our path to destruction" I sighed, thinking about things I've done in the past. "Although logic and reason may lead us astray, and stop us from using our God-given intuition."

"The civil war was very..." I heard from my left. "What did you say" I asked Thoreau, but he was gone. My mother was standing above me, a sure sign that I had once again slipped through time, and out of my nap. I put my head under my pillow and silently pleaded to be taken back in time, to any era, even to face a T-Rex was better than to face my mom and those 6 words I dreaded. I listened to the history channel go on about the civil war and I heard what I knew was coming. "Go clean your room Des" she told me. I glanced in the mirror on my way to my room, I was back to normal, only with a twinkle in my eyes, and the knowingness that I would now be a major history freak!

Branchville High School

Orangeburg County

Caroline Ott

### **“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...”**

I just graduated from high school. I was planning to move to Virginia and become an optometrist. I could not wait to move away from my parents. They always fought. I always thought their fights were stupid.

I went out to get the mail one morning. I can remember staring at the envelope. Seeing if I would be accepted into the college of my dreams or have to live with my parents the rest of my life made my life so exciting.

I got all my courage together and peeled the thin envelope flap open. I could not believe it. I didn't get in! I thought I was a good student, good looking, and the perfect person to go to college. I was so upset. I just sat there on our lumpy sofa. I only applied to one college.

When my mom walked in the front door, I started to panic. My heart was beating so fast I couldn't breathe. I ran past my mom and went outside. I kept running. I wanted to get out of that horrible place.

I stopped at a museum. I used to go there a lot, but we stopped after my dad started drinking. I used to love playing on the steps and looking at the beautiful paintings. My favorite painting was of a woman pouring her husband a glass of lemonade. It reminded me of my mom and dad sitting there, smiling. I started racing through the museum looking for that painting.

As I was rushing through the hallway, I slipped. When I looked up, I saw the painting I was looking for. Only something didn't seem right. She smiled at me. That painting moved! Then the woman poured her husband lemonade! The painting is alive!

I immediately called the police. They sent me to a mental institution. I wasn't crazy! The painting moved!

That is where I've been ever since. They let me visit the museum sometimes. I always look at that painting. They say the painting doesn't move, but I know the woman smiles at me and pours her husband lemonade. No matter what they say, I'll always know.

North Middle High School  
Orangeburg County  
Pressley Stevens

**"When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I..."**

"When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I knew something was up." At first I thought that I was dreaming. Then I pinched myself, and I didn't wake up. I wasn't in my familiar, soft, comfortable bed. Then I heard something in the hall, coming towards me. I realized it was music. It was beautiful, and inviting. I wanted so much to find the source, it was killing me. Then I saw him.

He was beautiful in every way. He was tall and his skin was golden, and he had eyes that I think anyone could get lost in. He had dark brown hair that flowed ever so gently to his shoulders. When he smiled, my breath escaped me.

He said "Hello, my name is Logan." I just stood there, stunned. "Well, do you have a name?" he inquired. I smiled shyly and looked down at the floor. His voice was soft, sensual, and it blew me away.

I said, "Sorry, my name is Cheyenne."

"Cheyenne. That is a beautiful name for a beautiful girl, and I shall remember it always." I could feel myself turning red. On the outside, all I saw was perfection when I looked at him. Something was wrong, though, on the inside, because when I took one look into his breathtakingly beautiful green eyes, I saw sadness, grief.

"You're sad." I pointed out. I could tell he was going to try to prove me wrong, so I said, "No, don't try to hide it. I can see in your eyes that you are lonely in this place that has no name."

He then said to me, "Why have you come? Why are you here? What is your purpose for coming to my home?"

"I actually don't know how I got here, all I know is that I'm here, and you are here with me," "This is your home?" I said, feeling nothing but sympathy for him.

He replied, "Yes, I have been here since I was a child. My parents brought me here." "They are upstairs, getting ready for the ball. Oh, won't you come with me?"

I accepted the lovely invitation, and we danced the night away. I never did go back home, for I fell in love with the boy named Logan. He was and will remain my everything for the rest of my life.

**R.C. Edwards Middle School**  
Pickens County  
**Paul Fang**

**When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?**

This ocean is not full, nor will it ever be full, just as the sky will never touch the sea. Looking back, I think of all the teardrops that have fallen into this ocean, my ocean—my ocean of memories. Tears of the deepest sorrows and of long-lost hopes are in this ocean, mingling with the teardrops of boundless joy, undying hope, and incredible, indescribable, never-ending love. Brothers and sisters these tears are. Never will the ocean in my heart be full, and never will it cease to exist. Tears have fallen into this ocean, and they shall continue to fall. Even after I leave this body, this ocean will still be mine and yours to cherish.

Sadness is not evil, for how can the sister of joy be so? No, sorrows make joys ever sweeter, and bring wisdom to my soul. The memories I made just hangin' out with my friends bring tears of joy to my eyes that will find their way to my ocean. Then I think of the oppressing sorrow I felt when I left my wife and child to defend the country in which they two were making memories and crying tears. Then my hope of coming back to be with the ones I loved was crushed, and I cried away my lost hopes and made new hopes of returning.

My physical youth is long gone, and death draws ever nearer, but not only happiness and joy falls into my heart. Now is the time for me to make memories by sharing my memories. My ocean will be in plain view for anyone in this world to see and draw wisdom. My youth still dances in these bones: in these fingers, it writes, and on my lips, it sparks laughter. The ecstasy of youth and the wisdom of age dance and frolic hand in hand in my ocean. Even now, so close to the end, I look forward to another day that I can make another memory and cry another tear filled with the joy of youth and the wisdom of sorrow.

My ocean holds many memories, both sad and happy, and now the ecstasy of youth and the wisdom of age dance and wait for more rain to fall. Each and every memory will be cherished by me and, maybe, the world. Once I leave this body, my ocean of memories will be the world's.

**Hand Middle School  
Richland County  
Samuel Trump**

**You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain what era you visited and explain why.**

The time machine landed on the dirty ground with a thud. I got out. My machine hissed behind me, let out some smoke, and was silent again. *That went well*, I thought. My last time traveling experience almost had me stuck in the throes of the French Revolution, but I luckily repaired my shot engine just before the mob of angry partisans arrived to get me. This time I had chosen to travel to ancient Rome. It had always interested me how a civilization could be so advanced for its time, so I wanted to see it firsthand.

There was a cool afternoon breeze drifting through the city, and I could hear the shouts and other sounds of a busy marketplace. I was in a dark alley between two tall buildings, and as I walked out a tremendous scene unfolded before my eyes. Hundreds of people walked about, buying and selling a wide variety of goods. Pottery, jewelry, food, weapons, animals, mosaics, and all kinds of other supplies and leisure items were being sold. Some soldiers milled about as well. There were also entertainers, who juggled and sang and danced.

Eventually I came to the end of the marketplace and happened upon a large, rough, cobble-stoned street. People were walking up and down it, and some others were on horseback. I proceeded through the throngs of people until I came to a fountain in front of a huge round building. It was the Pantheon. I walked in with many other people. Inside, the walls were painted with hundreds of murals depicting scenes of Roman gods

and goddesses. Priests and worshipers gathered to pray to their gods. I stood for a while gazing up at the beautiful paintings, then exited through the large bronze doors.

Walking a few more blocks down the busy road, I came to the Circus Maximus. It was a colossal, oval-shaped stadium that had a racetrack in the middle. This is where the famous chariot races would take place. It looked deserted, though. *I wonder why*, I pondered. My answer came in the form of thousands of shouts and yells coming from my left. As I turned, the Coliseum appeared ahead of me. It was a sight to behold. Tens of thousands of people were watching gladiators fight to the death in exotic settings. I hurried down the road and into the archways of the Coliseum to obtain a seat. I sat with one hundred thousand other spectators, and I looked on with amazements as wild animals were raised from beneath the sandy field by a system of ropes and pulleys. They would come up behind the gladiators and pounce on them. Slaves would have to come out and drag away the fighters' bodies from the blood-soaked ground.

Suddenly, though, I was snapped out of my gaze by a disturbance behind me. When I turned around, I saw two people getting into a fight over a seat. Soon many more spectators joined in, and soldiers began climbing the steps to break it up. I decided it was probably time for me to head out, seeing as I was in the middle of the brawl even though I wasn't participating in it. I quietly slipped away and walked back to where my time machine was hidden in the alley.

After coming back to the present, I fixed myself a bowl of ice cream and plopped down on my sofa in front of the television. *I guess the History Channel will have to do*, I thought.

Tierra Jennings

Kelly Mill Middle School

Richland 2 School District

“Eighty Years Old”

I’m sitting outside, watching the stars twinkle in the light of the night. My wispy, gray hair hangs loosely around my face as I stand up slowly. I hear my ankles pop at the movement and a dull pain rises around my legs. “Darn arthritis,” I think to myself, frowning. I gaze through the window to find my old friends Robert and Nicole bickering as always. Pushing my glasses up my nose, I sigh whole-heartedly and make my way inside. The small condo seems to shake as their voices grow louder. I listen to them bicker, smiling at how much the two haven’t changed.

I sit down in the nearest chair, still listening to the argument that won’t end. Hearing a creak near the door, I wonder if the neighbors have finally come to tell us to keep the noise down. It turns out it is only Nathaniel, coming up the steps with his walker. The man is so silly that it is impossible to tell him something without it going out of one of his ears. Walking in, he says nothing and makes a face. “Are they fighting again?” he mouths to me.

Nodding and smiling amusedly, I reply to him with a yes. Nathaniel groans and mumbles “friends not foes” under his breath before sitting in one of the arm chairs beside Nicole. Nicole’s gray hair is swept up in a messy bun and it bounces with each movement she makes. “You’ve been hogging the television since yesterday, Robert! Now give me the remote!” she yells, getting annoyed. Robert stubbornly holds the remote by his side, saying nothing.



I decide to cut in before the yelling continued. "Why are you guys fighting over the remote anyway?" When neither said anything, I shake my head. "You guys are hopeless." Out of nowhere, we all start laughing like old times. Nathaniel slowly gets up and grabs the remote out of Robert's hand. Holding it away from his reach, he sits back down and changes the channel. "Nathaniel!" Nicole and Robert say simultaneously. Nathaniel looks at them both and says, "What? You weren't watching it." Shaking my head, I laugh again at their expressions.

As I stare at the aging faces of my bemused friends, I begin to think about when we were in middle school. I know now that no matter how old you are, the friends you keep are the people you look forward to having in your life. They become a family, waiting for that one moment of truth to stand by your side when no one else understands you. I adore them more now at eighty than I could have ever imagined at the age of thirteen.

Saluda Middle School  
Saluda County  
Antonette Pough

America's New Slogan: Looking Toward the Future

It's out with the old, and in with the new! In this week's edition of America the Beautiful, we have come up with a new slogan in order to welcome the future, and the next generation. What's the slogan that's got people talking?!?! "The heart is in the South, and so is the good life."

To start off, this new slogan represents South Carolina. It shows we have spirit raising pride in our state, and are proud of where we come from. It also shows how much we care and appreciate our home state, South Carolina. To some, it does not mean as much, but to others, South Carolina is the reason they have freedom and so many other rights. This is one of the reasons South Carolina is a respected state.

Next, this slogan is a fabulous way to welcome newcomers to South Carolina. "The heart is in the South, and so is the good life" is a heart warming, head lifting phrase. Who wouldn't want to come and visit? This should also have a job of making South Carolina a tourist's attraction. Anybody passing through should want to stop and see what our slogan actually means. If I weren't already in South Carolina, I would surely stop by!

In addition, South Carolina's new slogan shows how much we care. It tells how inviting we are, and what we can accomplish when we work together. In my opinion, it not only welcomes, but also symbolizes how we feel about our state.

This new slogan is sure to draw a little more attention to the South, and inform people on our friendliness, and hospitality (Not to mention the best food you'll ever taste in a lifetime!) Is South Carolina for the future? With this slogan, I think so!

**Landrum Middle School  
Spartanburg County  
Raley Castro**

**“When the Pitcher in the Picture Began to Pour, I...”**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I glanced back at it quickly to make sure of what I saw. When I did glance back, I got a closer look at the old painting.

I moved in closer, drawn in by its beauty. The paints used were thick browns and greens to form trees and some splatters of blue to show that this was deep into the night. The main focus of the painting was a woman, sitting by what looked to be an icy stream on the outskirts of a forest. She was stunning, with thick, black hair tied up loosely with a gold ribbon. Some of the hair that wasn't caught by the ribbon fell against her milky, white skin. Her dress, fashioned from the Middle Ages, appeared from underneath her red cloak. In her hand was a pitcher that was cracked with age. Water was gingerly being poured into a goblet by her knee. I could see the water move within the paint. I could hear the cold echo of the water hitting the goblet.

I rubbed my eyes to make sure they weren't playing tricks on me. I glanced again and the water was still pouring. Perplexed, I reached out my hand to touch it. I grasped my hand quickly taken aback to what I felt. I saw drops of clear water trickling down my fingers. I stared in amazement,

wondering if this could really be happening. I looked back to inspect the painting. I was being challenged by the woman's brown eyes to just dare touch her water again. For what seemed like an eternity we just stood there, staring deeply into each other's eyes. When she finally looked away, fear crossed her face. Suddenly, she darted off between the trees.

"Hello," said a voice behind me. I turned around and there stood the auctioneer. I was at an art auction looking for a painting.

"Amazing piece!" he exclaimed.

"What?" I asked meekly. Did he know the woman moved?

"That painting right behind you," he stated. I turned back. She and the water appeared to have never moved.

"Yes, it is amazing. I'd like to purchase it," I informed him.

He took the picture off the wall and handed it to me. I paid him and walked out the door triumphantly with my bona fide magic painting, wondering what was next to come.

Boiling Springs Junior High School  
Spartanburg County  
Abbey Sims

You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain what era you visited and explain why.

"God as my witness, I will never go hungry again!" Quotes and movies like *Gone With The Wind* have always captured my attention with their tragic or carousing Civil War tales. The contrasting tranquility and chaos of this time period always fascinated me, as well. Ever since the rainy day I saw this movie for the first time, I have wanted to travel back in time to relive this era. Although I am puzzled with myself because I despise wearing dresses, the Civil War period's plantation houses, simplistic methods of transportation, and perplexing aspects of war have led me to believe, often, that I was born in the wrong era.

Anyone who has ever laid eyes on a house like Terra from *Gone With The Wind*, must envy its inhabitants, and not only because the wealthy did none of the housework of course, the insides of these houses are riveting. The immense spiral staircases, extravagant ballrooms fit for a king, antique paintings and elaborate archways all establish the initial passion and lifestyle of the south during this time. Though the insides of these plantations were extraordinary, the outer segment may have been more breathtaking than its inside. For, in most cases, if you walked out under the enormous columns of the porch, all that could be seen for miles would be the rolling hills of cotton or other cash crops, consuming the land like an infectious disease.

Surely I am one of the only people who respect the Civil War era for its methods of transportation, since the only way to get

Somewhere was by horseback, horse-drawn carriage, or your own two feet. Obviously, the wealthy usually didn't drive their own carriages; They had drivers. Yet sometimes, they would simply order a horse to be tacked, and effortlessly ride away to their own discession. Furthermore, there was no driver's license or age limit for who could "drive" on the road. Clearly, this is very different from today when one would face serious consequences for a "stunt" like this.

Apparently, the Civil War was a time filled with chaos, turmoil, destruction, and mourning. Nevertheless, this era of confusion was marked with extreme patriotism, compassion, and bravery. Quite often during this time, the women in the homes were forced to "pick-up the slack" by taking over plantations, and taking care of businesses in their husbands' absences. This was a time when families came together. Perhaps because of the suffering caused by war, citizens began to take pride in their lifestyle. They showed a great deal of compassion toward passing soldiers, giving them supplies such as food or water. I believe this time of realization would have been both inspiring and enlightening. This was a time of pride and patriotism for all.

The Civil War was more than just a time in history; it was a remarkable era of plantations, horse-drawn carriages, and an unforgetably globe-changing war. This was a period in which people learned to stand-up for what they believed in. In my opinion, this era was probably the most insightful for many reasons. Although it was a time of turmoil, I believe it was a time when real unity, in the end, became a part of America. For these reasons, I believe this era would have been powerful and insightful.

Cowpens Middle School  
Spartanburg County  
Danielle Lemmons

**“When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...”**

**When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I saw the world transforming. Colors began swirling, winds began whirling, and I began spinning. I closed my eyes, then everything became calm. When I opened them, I saw the beautiful world of the painting that I was just looking at.**

**I rotated around to see the rest of the painting. When I rotated around, my eyes grew in amazement to the beauty of the land. Beautiful mixtures of colors I had never seen emerged from everywhere. They were so beautiful, florescent, and bright. I looked up to see a sky of pinks, blues, and greens of all shades. Everything here looked like it was right out of a children’s picture book about fairies and unicorns.**

**Instead of just standing there in a daze, I decided to explore. As I walked over the hills of lime green grass, I saw plants and animals of all kinds. The plants and animals were as colorful as the world itself. The plants were bursting with beautiful, elegant colors. One flower was two feet tall, and on every petal there was a different color. As I was looking at the flower, something shadowed over me. I looked up to see a graceful, tall, horse-like animal looking down at me. It nudged me until I stood up and petted it. It pushed me to its side, urging me to get on. So, I jumped on its back and carried on with my journey.**

**As I rode along, I noticed I was being led toward a great forest. As I grew closer, I began to see plants and animals of all kinds, it looked so peaceful in there. It almost seemed like everything was in perfect harmony. I was led to a huge opening in the forest and let down. The moment my feet touched the ground, I heard a beautiful singing. I followed the sound as it led me out of the forest, and back to the painting of my world**

When I arrived at the painting, the singing stopped. As I gazed at the painting, I thought aloud, "Why was I brought here to see such a beautiful place?" Then after a moment of silence I heard, "You were brought here to see what the world would be like, should be like." I spun around to see a woman holding a pitcher full of color. On one side of the pitcher there were dark, murky colors; on the other side there were bright, vivid colors. She spoke once more and said, "Try and make it better before it's too late!" With these words, she tipped the pitcher over, and out came the colors mixing into the colors of the world. Suddenly, the temperature dropped, the winds picked up, colors began swirling, making me dizzy. I closed my eyes immediately. When everything eased, I opened my eyes to a painting of the woman holding the pitcher. She was smiling at me.



Woodruff Middle School  
Spartanburg County,  
Sarah Bosler

You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain the era you visited and explain why.

I traveled to the time of the Native Americans, before Europeans colonized the land. I chose this era because I wanted to know what it was like to live so close to nature. I also wanted to know what life was like for them.

Native American's lives were not easy. A tribe had to work together as a team to survive. Each day, the men went hunting for long hours. The women stayed behind to take care of the crops and to look after the children. Each family lived in a small hut and slept on animal skins. It wasn't very comfortable, but it was the only thing they had.

Life back then held many dangers. Wild animals and harsh conditions constantly tested their strength. The bitter winter winds and long summer droughts could be deadly. They also had to be cautious of neighboring tribes. People had to be strong to survive.

Even with all the dangers and hardships, Native Americans still had time for fun.

They would have long ceremonies where they would sing and dance around the camp fire for long hours. They also had many games and stories. One of their games resembles our game of football today.

Although Native Americans had to go through a lot to survive, they still had a great life. Their many hardships brought them closer as a family, and stronger as a tribe.

**Florence Chapel Middle School  
Spartanburg County  
Nina Mei Rochester**

When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?

An elderly woman limps up the creaking staircase, both of them worn away in years and memories. She pictures a young girl racing her way up the wooden steps, and calling back, "You can't beat me!"

Then, another youthful voice would reply, "Oh, yes I can!" Then the sound of footsteps marching up hollow wood and laughter would echo in her ears. So long, long ago, she was that girl in pigtails marching up the steps, to meet her dear grandmother. Now, here she was in her grandmother's place.

She faintly smiled at the memory as she shuffles her way into her bedroom. Simple and blank to the eye, but complex and chaotic to the mind. Generations of her family had entered this room, and she felt spiritually connected to the past, as if the spirits of her family still stayed to comfort her.

She then slipped her dainty feet out of her slippers, weakly climbed into the bed, laid her head on the pillow, and closed her sagging eyelids. Minutes passed until she fell into a light slumber, hoping God would give her another day to live on this wonderful earth.

Far away, in her dreams, where fantasy and wonder exists, it is filled with memories. An elfin child slipped her infantile hand into the cookie jar when no one noticed, or her thirteenth birthday when her mother surprised her with her first cell phone. So many memories, so little time to make them. It seemed like just yesterday she was a wild teenager who couldn't see past Saturday nights. Now, she regrets her whole past. She never understood how wonderful and melancholy life really was. She never realized all the hardships, the pains, and the joys of life. She was a mere child, accustomed to fantasy and dreams. She believed in magic, she thought everything she ever wished for would someday be given to her; she pictured life as a fairytale. The truth of the matter is, life isn't perfect. The world is, was, and always will be filled with problems. Now, she understood what her grandmother meant when she whispered, "Live life to the fullest," on her deathbed before she was beckoned by the seraphs of heaven.

A tear glimmered in her eye and slid down her rough cheek at the memory of her grandmother....

----

I will be that woman someday, in the distant future. I've always been too quick, too fast, I never spent time to "smell the roses" or enjoy the slow-paced life. Through all of this, at least I have learned one thing about life: It passes in the blink of an eye.

**Gable Middle School  
Spartanburg County  
Linda Gaida**

**You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain what era you visited and explain why.**

To relive history, I chose Shanghai, China, during World War II. I have always been extremely amazed by the trials people in concentration camps faced at the time and have always wondered what it would be like to put myself in their position – to experience the agony.

The year was 1943. Streets were bustling with townspeople and vagrants, children, and storeowners. Men in Japanese military uniforms were at every corner giving orders and beating their sticks on the backs of Chinese peasants, women, and children, as well.

“Hurry, Mary, hurry!” my mother cried frantically over the unfamiliar sounds of panic and distress. Her once silky, brown hair was now disheveled and hanging in her face. She was never the same since the war started. Now the Japanese were in control.

“Let go of me!” my father rumbled in his English accent. A Japanese officer was pulling my father’s arm motioning towards a truck for captives. The officer barked orders and spat at my dad’s feet. With a quick movement he struck my father with his rifle, forcing my mom to let go of me and tend to her husband. Immediately, they were pulled into the current of hundreds of people, and were in no way able to get back to me. I felt something hit my head. A fierce pain filled one side of my face as I hit the ground.

When I woke, my eyes were met by two others. I stood up halfway, only to fall back down. My entire head was throbbing.

“Easy there,” said a voice. “You took a nasty hit.”

“Is this a camp? Are my parents with me?”

“Well, for your first question, yes, this is Lunghua Camp, if I’m not mistaken. And as for question number two, I don’t know where your parents are; you came here alone. But listen, the best chance you have of surviving this place is to keep your mouth shut and do exactly as you are told.”

So that is exactly what I did for two and a half years. I was allowed to go anywhere in the camp except past a barbed wire fence. I spent my time trading items that I didn’t need for potatoes. Potatoes, soggy and covered in weevils, were our only food. Those little beetles I ate for protein, as well. As our ration became smaller, our main concern was staying alive. I would try to ingratiate myself towards the Japanese, but my forced smiles would only depress them. I was keen on learning airplane names, always waiting for the B29 Bomber that would end the war. In my mind, I knew it wasn’t that easy.

Most people would sit around, baking in the sun’s heat, waiting to die. The smells that came from them were unbearable. I had no place to go. People were burning with fevers and coughing up blood. Their emaciated bodies were unable to take much more pain.

I became callous to the things happening around me, and soon I didn’t care if I died. I didn’t cry anymore either. I was older now – fifteen – and I had seen images unimaginable. I was hardly able to feel anymore. I didn’t feel sorrow, or love, or anger. Without feeling, every breath we took was just a clock ticking. It was circular. We woke up just waiting for God to do us a favor. The smell of rotting corpses, along with the words starvation, death, and disease, hung in the air.

From this experience I have learned to be thankful for what I have. No more will I spend my time wondering what it was like to know real suffering. Let me tell you, though, it is better to spend your time wondering what a war is like than to have lived through one.

**McCracken Junior High School  
Spartanburg County**

**Mason Brandt Gillespie**

**You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain  
what era you visited and why.**

Running... I have to keep running. If I stop they will catch me and I will be through. I just have to keep moving. I can't be caught...

My name is Ross Ian Bell and I am a time traveler. I was born in February of 2028; yes I am from the future. I don't know how I always get myself into these messes, but I always do. First it was the dinosaurs. Then it was the samurai, that's plural. And how could I forget the World War II battle field. I still know nothing of how I got myself enlisted in the army.

Right now I am being chased by the gladiators. That's right the Roman warriors themselves. I can't really blame them though. I mean, did you know that gladiators are slaves or POWs (prisoners of war) fighting each other for their freedom? That's not the only thing I have found out on my journey to Rome. But before I tell you what I have learned, let me tell you how this adventure began.

I am an inventor and my greatest invention is the time watch. I know, I know so original right, but they haven't been invented yet, not even in my time. The time watch lets you travel through time and space to the exact place and time you want, or at least that is the concept. You see it is still a prototype. I still have a few bugs to work out. One day I thought I had fixed them. Boy was I wrong.

When I tried to go back a few seconds I end up in the Cretaceous Period. Since then I have been traveling through the time stream trying to get back to my own time. In my latest time jump I ended up here in beautiful and peaceful Rome. Beautiful and deadly is more like it. I was walking down the road when someone saw me. Yeah, did you know that Latin word for road is via? Oh, sorry, back to the story. The Roman man who saw a strange man walking down the road, or via, in weird clothes (me) yelled, "Meus servus!" Then all of a sudden I was surrounded by about ten Roman guards. I guess "meus servus" means "my slave" because the guards were "returning" me to the man as if I was a run away dog or something along those lines. I don't see how I looked like a Roman slave but that would have to wait, because my "master" sold me to a Colosseum to fight, and here I am, running for my life from fellow slaves in a Roman Colosseum.

Then it happened... a portal appeared right in front of my face. At just the right time, too. I must have hit my watch while I was running. I had no idea it would take me but I didn't care, anywhere would be better than here. So I dove right in.

It was over I was safe I was lying in some sort of field. It was then that I lifted my head. There right in front of me, with a sword at my throat, was a man with a large black beard and an angry gaze. I was staring into the eyes of Attila the Hun himself.

**Furman Middle School, Sumter County**

**Kelsey Brunson**

**You traveled to a different era to relive history. Explain what era you visited and explain why.**

It was a normal day. Well, for me it was normal. My mom and I were arguing like always. She kept telling me that I was taking my freedom for granted and that I was being ungrateful. As always, I really wasn't listening to her. When the mailman ran that day, I decided to go check the mailbox. When I stepped out of my house, I was not in my neighborhood anymore. Everything around me looked so different. Smoke was in the air and people were running all around.

There was an African American woman carrying a baby. I thought about asking her if everything was ok, but she looked too worried. I thought to myself, everything looked so familiar. It was like I'd seen this all before, but where, my history book maybe?

Two men looked at me and asked me, "Where do you think you are going?" I didn't know what to say. They looked so cruel and unfriendly. All of a sudden, one of them snatched me up and whispered something to the other one. They threw me in the back of some wagon, all chained up. I was between an old woman singing Negro spirituals and a young, dark skin girl about my age.

Later, we were all stuffed on a boat with other young and old blacks. I asked one middle-aged woman, "Ma'am, where are we going?"

She looked at me with eyes full of fear, and whispered, "They finding us a master."

All I could think of was, where am I? Will I ever make it back home?

When they made us unload off the boat, they started an auction. I was the fifth in line to be auctioned off! It was my turn. A white woman with curly red hair started the bid at fifty dollars. A white man with short, black hair finished it at 500 dollars. He would be my master. My new master took me back to his home. The closer we got to his home, the more it looked like my house.

When I stepped out of his buggy, the man disappeared, so did his buggy. I was back at home. Thoughts ran through my head, was I really? Did I really? So many questions ran through my mind. Maybe sometimes I do take my freedom for granted. I know one thing for sure, I don't ever want to go back to that era again. I am so grateful that I am free!

**Chestnut Oaks Middle School  
Sumter School District 17  
Matthew Henderson**

**When You Are Eighty Years Old, What Will Your Life Be Like?**

Waking up is pretty easy nowadays, considering I have my own butler who wakes me with the smell of coffee. His name is Jeeves Harrington. I created him myself from my Prototype 326. He is nothing more than pure robotics. In case you haven't figured it out, the year is 2074.

Since you've been asleep for sixty-seven years, let me catch you up with today's technology and how my life operates. First of all, we don't drive Fords, Mercedes, and Cadillacs anymore. Traveling is as easy as the blink of an eye. You close your eyes and picture where you want to go, and voila' – you're there! There is no more DMV where you wait 40,000 hours to get to the front of the line. And eating is just as easy, too. You grab the spray bottle, turn the dial to what you crave and squeeze the nozzle. Pizza, popcorn, toast, lasagna, escargot, and steak, you name it; you can make it as easy as that.

Jobs aren't very common anymore. Most things don't cost anything now. When the sun blew up, our barrier protected us, but pieces still reached us and somehow they still glow. Several people have jobs to collect them and get them to the leader of our world. He's trying to recreate the sun. The pieces are worth a mother-load and mean a lot to people of this world.

Since you will be living with me, let me tell you a little about my life and how things work in my house. As you know, the butler is Jeeves. He does any and everything for me. I take my medication everyday at 9:30 am. If I forget, because I do that a lot now, Jeeves will remind me. You can bet on that. My house consists of four bedrooms, three bathrooms, a dining room, two kitchens, living room, theater, game room, and laundry room. My wife and I sleep in the master bedroom and our grandson sleeps in another room. His parents are on a space mission. As old people always do, I have coffee with my neighbors every Thursday and meetings with the community president on Tuesdays. Of course, coffee is involved there, too.

You may think that since I'm eighty years old, that I have a boring life. You are completely wrong. I love being outside and because most people now don't hunt like we use to, I enjoy a day of fishing every now and then. It was a good thing that they outlawed hunting because now we see a lot more wildlife. I sit in the old deer stands and watch the deer and other animals roam the woods. I've become very passionate about the outdoors in my old age and you, too, will one day grow to enjoy it. It's a beautiful thing, just like my life at the tender age of eighty.



**Lockhart School**  
**Union County**  
**Alexandria Maria Poulos**

**When you are eighty years old, what will your life be like?**

We are at the beach having tons of fun. There are so many tourists here, you could get lost! We stop at a picture booth, and I take a picture with my family. The photographer counts to three...and SNAP! Sixty-seven years later, I'm enjoying the best of times. I am in my senior years cooking, babysitting little kids, and living on the beaches of California.

When I turn eighty, I will have a lot of time on my hands so what better way to use my hands than to bake cakes. Chocolate chip cookies will be a snack you can always find at my house. Once all the sugar products are made, I can eat them and share them with the homeless. Holiday parties will be enjoyed by all because of all the delicious recipes I will make.

Once I put all the cooking aside, I can baby-sit for kids in my neighborhood and my own grandkids. To be a great sitter I would have to spoil the kids with chewy cookies, delicious yummy cakes, and homemade ice-cream. Letting the kids play games is another thing we could do while at my house. My grandkids, along with kids in the neighborhood, would have so much fun with me; they would never want to leave because they will think I'm the coolest person ever.

Granted, if I wanted to be the hippest grandmother around; I would have to live somewhere exotic. I would choose to live on the beaches of Malibu, California. My grandkids and I would walk to the beach, play in the sand, and build sandcastles. I could also watch them play in the sparkly ocean. My husband and I could go for walks on the beach and hunt for different types of seashells if our aching bones allowed it. Living by the beach would be awesome, and I could relax a lot.

Now, do not let anyone tell you there are not fun things to do at eighty. My life would be cooking, babysitting, and walking the beaches of California. Being eighty lets you have less stress and responsibility, and you can do whatever you want. When I am eighty, I hope my whole family will be walking along the beach, stop at a picture booth and take a picture; the photographer counts to three...and SNAP! My own grandkids sixty-seven years later will be looking back on that one picture thinking about their childhood with the coolest granny in the world!



## The Pitcher in the Picture

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I was scared out of my mind. I had never witnessed anything like this before, so at first I ignored it. It was, to me, a figment of my imagination. This was until I woke up one night to find my kitchen flooded with water. I decided to investigate. There were no wet footprints outside of the house and no evidence of an intruder. I finally, but reluctantly accepted that my house was being haunted.

I went to the library to research ghosts later that day. There were many descriptions, but none that matched my situation. Finally, I gave up and went home. I began to search the house for any evidence of a supernatural presence. I didn't look too long because as soon as I walked into my kitchen, something was very much out of place. There was where the pitcher once sat in my picture, a woman staring me right in the face.

The woman was about twenty-six years old with beautiful ebony skin. She had on a plain, yellow dress and was barefoot. She spoke to me, asking my name and why I was present in this house. After getting over my shock, I answered her question and asked her why she was in *my* house. She answered saying that her name was Amari and that she was the former slave of a plantation owner. She told me the story of how she arrived in America and how she and her husband were sold separately to different owners. She was searching for him and was determined not to spend eternity without him. Without knowing what I was getting into, I decided to help her.

As we began to plan our search, I realized that Amari could do many things that I hadn't read about in the library like inhabiting pictures and changing their appearance. She could also cry, a lot, which explains the flooded kitchen. While we planned we found an abundance of information about James, Amari's husband, and his former owners. It was late in the night, so I had lit a fire in the chimney. Suddenly, the air began to blow lightly against me. I didn't really pay attention, but it soon dawned upon me that I was sitting *in* a ghost.

The man walked, or rather glided, to Amari and hugged her tightly. I was astonished, but saw that she wasn't upset. The man was about six and a half feet tall and had skin that was even darker than Amari's. He wore a pair of well worn overalls. He

looked very powerful, but had a gentle demeanor so I decided I was comfortable having him in my home.

We all began to talk to each other and I began to notice that we all seemed to share certain physical and character traits. I think Amari sensed it too because she began to talk about family. I had never met my mother or father so I wasn't too enthusiastic about this conversation. I know that they knew I was uncomfortable because James kept trying to change the subject. This seemed to upset Amari and she began to cry. I was concerned, both for her and my new carpet, so I tried to comfort her. When she had calmed down I asked her what had caused her to become so emotional. It was soon after I asked this question that Amari told me that she and James were my parents.

That was the most memorable moment in my life. My mom and dad live with me now and I couldn't be happier. Every day we add a picture to our book of memories and despite the many myths, *these* ghosts show up very clearly. Every time I look at one of them my mind thinks about the day when the pitcher in the picture began to pour and what my life would be like if it hadn't.

**York Junior High School  
York County  
Elizabeth Morgan Thompson**

“When the pitcher in picture began to pour, I

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I watched the water sparkle as it dribbled into the glass. Although it seemed so real, so life like, it was still, frozen, quiet. The water continued to pour, but the glass never filled.

As I stared at the pitcher in the picture, I saw the surrounding area. I took in the beauty of every day life. Even though the pitcher always poured, the glass never filled.

My eyes glistened as I took a walk and thought of all the times I tried to fill my glass. I tried so hard to get the replenishment of my desire. To refresh this dry, worn out, stressful life of mine.

I also remember the times when I have flooded my glass and wasted all of that beautiful water. I watched it flow over to the floor and into the Earth... wasted.

Tears fell from my eyes. Why does life have to be so difficult? Why so complicated? Why must I cry over an ordinary picture? So now, when the pitcher in the picture begins to pour, I turn around slowly and walk away.

Then I began to wonder. Who was pouring the pitcher? Who was trying to fill their glass and why? Who were they filling it for? Was it for themselves, or was it for a loved one? Was anything going to be added to the glass? Why did the painter even paint the blasted picture anyway?

These questions raced through my mind. They are the questions that were begging for answers. How many people do you see walking down the street trying to get their glasses filled? How many are working for too little?

When I arrive home, I take off my coat and go into the kitchen. I laugh at how silly I must be for letting a picture upset me. The thirst from the long, thoughtful walk was excruciating!

I opened the refrigerator, took out a pitcher of water, and filled myself a glass with a smile. I thought about how the pitcher and the glass reflected my life. To see what I want and cannot have. That is my life... a pitcher in a picture.

**Clover Junior High School  
York County  
Gabrielle Bryant**

**“When you are 80 years old, what will your life be like?”**

When I'm 80 years old I will have achieved all of my dreams. I will have traveled the world. I will have made a difference. I will have lived!

All of my dreams will have come true. I will have helped find a cure for cancer. I will have founded a foundation that helps build houses and schools for children in Africa. At the same time I would have had a big family standing beside me cheering me on.

The world would be my backyard. I will have traveled from Beijing, China to the Andes Mountains in Peru, and everywhere in between. I will have seen a dingo in Australia, and the majestic creatures of the rain forest in South America.

I will have made a difference. Even if it was to the little girl whose mom's life I helped save from finding a cure for cancer. Or maybe I made a difference to the little boy who now has a house in Africa. Maybe I will have made a difference doing little things like helping a old man who couldn't find his way home or to my kids for just being their mother and always supporting them.

I will have lived life to the fullest. Not all good times, and not all bad. I will have done the little things and the big things too. Going to college or getting my first job. I will have stayed out of work, and played “hooky” with my kids, and told hundreds of people I love them.

When I'm 80 years old my life wouldn't have been completely perfect, but it will have been filled with thousands of perfect moments. I will have lived, laughed, loved, and

mostly cried (happy and sad tears). When I'm 80 years old I'll spend my days with my grandchildren sitting on my front porch. Watching them play games, and run around. I'll remember when I was like that. When I'm 80 years old I will be who I always wanted to be.

**Saluda Trail Middle School**  
York County  
**Austin Abel**

## **When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I...**

When the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I did a double take. A cold chill ran up my spine as I watched the blood red wine pour into the golden chalice. The holder of the wine was a man in his thirties with slicked back black hair. He looked up at me smirking. I started to back up on the creaking floorboards when my back hit the wall. The man in the portrait stood up and dropped the container of wine. The man began to walk towards me until he seemed to be pressing himself against the invisible barrier between his world and mine. "Who are you?" I shouted! I started to creep along the wall, so I would have a straight shot at the door.

He simply replied, "Do you believe in ghosts?" He tilted his head slightly. "No!" I shouted. This can't be real! I shook my head. Then the air around the portrait began to ripple. His head came into focus in the front of the portrait. I blinked, but now his fingertips were moving focused too. I realized what was happening. He was coming out of the picture! I ran to the door screaming. It hung open, and I saw the outside. I ran faster, but the door slammed shut. I stopped at the door and tried the knob. It was locked.

"Young William," I jerked around and saw the man standing in the middle of the room, dressed smartly. As he began to walk toward me, he said, "You better start believing in ghost stories." He stopped a few feet from me. "You're in one."

I screamed and ran for the stairs. I ran up them two at a time, heart pounding. As I ran I heard him say, "You can't escape, and you never will." As I ran, I said, "We'll see about that!" He began to walk at an inhumanly pace, then I reminded myself he wasn't.

Once I was on the landing, I went into the first bedroom. Inside there was a chair and a dusty bed. I glanced at the window and grabbed the chair. I threw it at the window. It crashed through. I looked out the window and moaned. Under it was a wrought iron fence. If I jumped, I'd be impaled. If not, I shuttered at the thought.

"What now, William?" The ghost asked behind me. I turned around, smiled and waved. Then, I jumped.

I woke up in a cold sweat. I looked around in my dark bedroom. "Only a dream," I sighed. Then I heard, "Hello William!" I screamed.



Springfield Middle School  
York 4 - Fort Mill School District  
Maggie Sharp

A3

The picture had hung in the library of our house for as long as I could remember. I never understood it, though I saw it almost everyday. All I could see in the picture was a hand tilting a pitcher, but only far enough so a steady stream of water flowed from it. Dad left before I was born, I was an only child and mom was always working. We weren't very close.

That night I spent alone. Mom was at some party for work. I sat in the library reading a book. It's not the most fun night but I was used to being alone. The picture hung over the fireplace that burned hot and bright. Being mid January, it was cold. While reading I noticed the picture out of the corner of my eye. As much as I tried to focus on my book, my eyes always wandered back to the picture. Finally, I put my book down and stared at the picture. Why would someone paint a pitcher? Where is the water from the pitcher going? These questions and more puzzled me. I must have stared it for two hours.

The phone suddenly rang. On the other end of the phone a doctor spoke slowly and calmly. He told me my mother had been in a car accident and was in a coma. I was in shock and couldn't breathe. Dazed, I got in my car and drove to the hospital. When I got there I asked the nurse at the desk where I could find my mom and she pointed to the first door on the left. Not knowing what awaited me when I stepped through the doorway; I walked slowly, prolonging the sight of my mother on one of those stiff hospital beds. The image broke my heart. She was never stationary; she was always moving and was always doing something. Now she didn't move at all, she just lay there. Two days later, she died.

At home, I walked into the library and broke down. Tears poured from my eyes. Again the picture caught my eye. This time I understood. In old times people would use pitchers and water basins to cleanse themselves and that's all I wanted to do now, cleanse myself of the pain. As the pitcher in the picture began to pour, I sat there in the library and cried.

Maggie Sharp  
Springfield Middle  
York 4